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THE ILLUSTRATED MESSENGER

GLAD TIDINGS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

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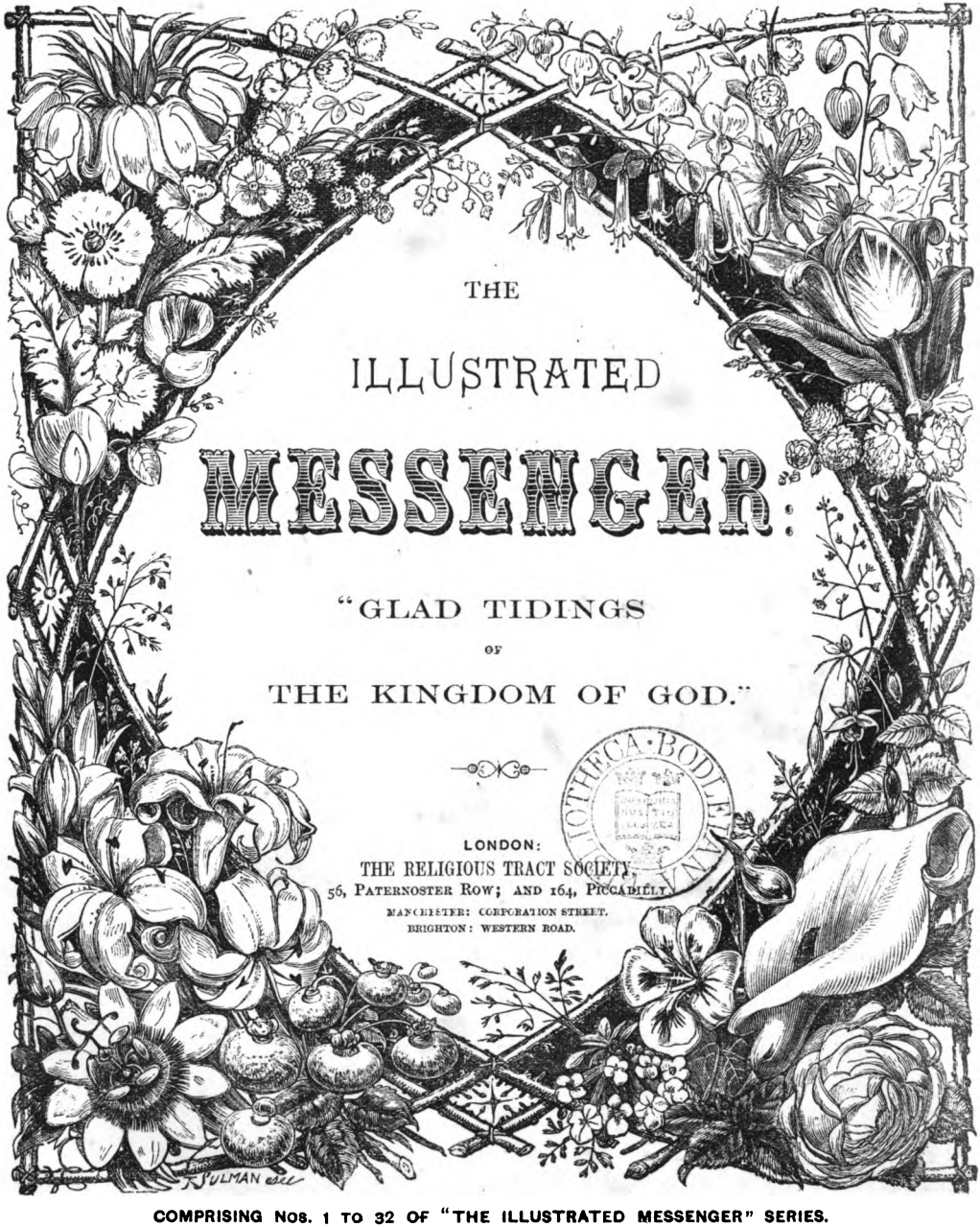
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THE

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OF

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Joseph Ebert; a Struggle for Life	5
The Chief Shepherd	9
Are you Insured?	13
The Light of Godliness	17
The Patched Coat; or, The Sunday Trip Interrupted	21
Good-bye	25
Escape for thy Life	29
The Leper's Quarter	33
He would not Believe	37
The First Grave	41
How to Hear	45
What will make a Death-bed Easy?	49
Come ye to the Waters	53
He Begged hard for Mercy	57
Cut it Down	61
Rest at Home	65
The Love of God	69
He was Praying	73
London	77
A Good Conscience	81
Prize the Bible	85
How Long have I to Live?	89
The Worth and Danger of the Soul	93
Refuge!	97
The Friend that has no Equal	101
How Much are you Worth?	105
Self-Converse	109
The Unhappy Family made Happy	113
Do not be Offended	117
The New-made Grave	121
At Midnight	125
The Renewing of the Holy Ghost	129

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JOSEPH EBERT; OR, A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

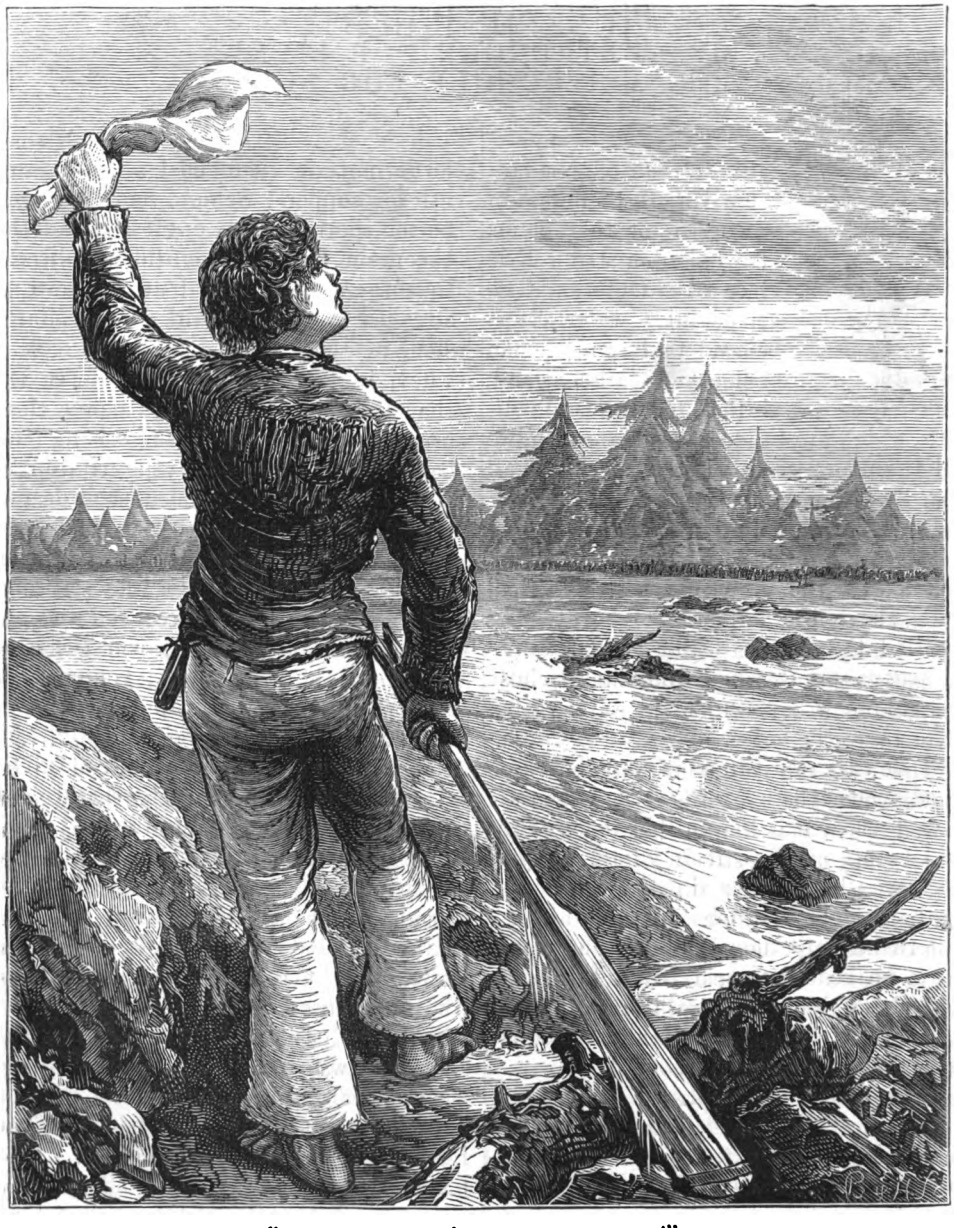


"COURAGE, EBERT! COURAGE, MY LAD!"

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JOSEPH EBERT; OR, A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.



"COURAGE, EBERT! COURAGE, MY LAD!"

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JOSEPH EBERT;

OR, A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.



THE Falls of Niagara are in the course of the river of that name, flowing from Lake Erie into Lake Ontario. The river above the falls is considerably wider than below. A large island, called Goat Island, divides the stream into two parts, which are called the American Fall and the Horse-shoe Fall. The former, from the water being more closed up by rocks, is six feet higher than the latter. A picturesque bridge connects Goat Island with the American shore. The space above the falls, for some distance, is called the Rapids—from the fearfully impetuous way in which the water rushes over its rocky bed.

How vast the volume of water is which flows down these cataracts may be supposed, when it is known that it forms the chief part of the stream of the mighty St. Lawrence, before it is joined by the Ottawa. The water in the rapids—loudly roaring—leaps, bubbles, and hisses, as it rushes impetuously on with a power which no boat can stem, till it takes its final leap into the seething cauldron below. Above the rapids the river is navigable into Lake Erie.

Three men were employed in loading a small craft with sand, the youngest of whom, Joseph Ebert, was a tall, fine, active lad of eighteen. Towards evening, their task accomplished, they launched forth in their little boat to catch some fish for supper. Seldom had they found better sport, and so engrossed did they become in it, that they did not discover that their boat was drifting down the stream. A sudden whirl of the punt, as she lifted to a wave, made them look up, when, to their dismay, they discovered that they were within the power of the dreaded rapids. In vain, seizing their oars, they tugged and tugged to gain the shore; they shrieked in their despairing efforts; the waters seemed to answer mockingly. An oar broke, leaving them more helpless still. The boat striking a rock was dashed to pieces, and the next instant the waters closed over the heads of two of the crew. One, young Ebert, yet floated—hurried rapidly along towards the falls, down which he well knew that no man had ever gone and lived. A few yards more only remained to be traversed before he must take that fearful plunge, and be no more seen; when before him appeared a log of timber firmly jammed between the rocks in the stream. By a desperate effort he grasped it, and drew himself out of the water. Night had come on; no one was likely to pass; his voice could not be heard amid the roar of the cataract. There he was discovered, still clinging, when morning dawned—about half way between the bridge leading to Goat Island and the American Fall. The bridge and the neighbouring shores were soon crowded with anxious spectators.

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A fellow-creature, rejoicing in youth and strength, was placed in a position of the most fearful peril. "How can he be rescued?" was the question.

He was so near, that it seemed almost as if a hand stretched out would save him. But the fierce rapids rushed between him and the shore, where alone safety could be found. Every one was eager to offer assistance; but among all that crowd there was no one with the practical knowledge which enabled him to render effectual aid in the emergency. Sometimes Ebert might be seen walking about on the rocks surrounding the log, as if contemplating the possibility of wading, or swimming on shore; but he was beckoned back by the spectators. A small strong raft was at length formed, and, by means of ropes, allowed to float down towards him. All anxiously watched its progress. It floated buoyantly—it was almost within his reach—in another minute he might be saved—when the rope became entangled in the rocks. A cry of regret escaped the crowd. Ebert, after contemplating the raft for some time, slid down into the water, waded out till he could reach the rope, and after great labour succeeded in freeing it from the rocks. The spectators shouted with satisfaction; and still more so, when they saw him manfully towing the raft out of the strength of the current towards his place of refuge. Having secured himself to the raft, by means of lashings fastened to it for the purpose, he made the signal that he was ready to commence his fearful voyage. Those who had charge of it hauled away, till, within a short distance of some small islands connected with Goat Island, the rope catching, the raft lay motionless in the fiercest part of the rapids. Now more than a cry—a long, loud groan of commiseration and despair escaped from the spectators. In vain they hauled on the rope, fearful, too, lest it should be cut by the rocks; neither dared Ebert move, dreading to be washed off the raft. But there were many brave hearts anxious to save him, though no one could devise the means.

A boat brought overland was now launched, with a strong hawser secured to her; and a volunteer bravely shoved off from the island, as far as he could venture towards the young man. "Courage, Ebert! courage, my lad!" he sang out; "we'll heave you a rope, and if you'll make yourself fast to it, we'll haul you on shore." But Ebert shook his head, for he dreaded lest, while securing the rope, he might be washed off the raft. Various devices were suggested, but abandoned as impracticable.

At length it became known that a life-boat had been sent for from Buffalo; and it was perceived that, had Ebert remained on his first resting-place, he might have avoided the great danger in which he was now placed.

The life-boat appeared; it was launched amid the shouts of the multitude, and was lowered slowly by a hawser to where Ebert clung to the raft. Now is the time for the youth to summon all his energies. In another moment he expects to grasp the side of the life-boat, and be saved. He casts off the lashings by which he is held to the raft. The spectators restrain their breath with the intensity of their anxiety. Will the boat reach him, or be dashed to pieces

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in those fiercely agitated waters? She floats! she floats! She touches the raft itself. Ebert sees her; the courage for which he has been so conspicuous throughout the terrible day revives within him. A shout of joy is heard; all think that he is in safety. He springs up, and leaps towards the boat. What means that cry of horror which escapes from the crowd? Alas! he has missed his aim. The boat sheers away from him, and he falls headlong into the current. Still he is not lost; he rises to the surface; he strikes out boldly; his foot touches a rock; he springs with the last efforts of despair towards the shore, making three or four almost superhuman leaps. As many more and he will be safe; but alas! the water deepens—again he swims—he swims strongly after all his hard exertions. Life is sweet; and Ebert has life, and youth, and strength. He seems even to make way against that headlong tide. It is but for a moment. The waters are too mighty for him; his strength begins to fail; his strokes grow feebler; slowly he recedes from the shore, his straining eyeballs fixed on those who would save him, but cannot. Now he is borne backward into the fiercer part of the current. All hope has fled. Swiftly and more swiftly he is dragged on towards the brink of that terrific precipice. His fellow-men standing around sicken at the sight. Still he struggles—still full of life and energy he reaches the very edge; and then, as if to gain one more look at the world he is about to leave, he springs almost out of the water—his arms raised frantically above his head. Then, uttering one last fearful shriek, heard even above the ceaseless roar of the cataract, he falls backward, and the next instant is hidden for ever from human sight, amidst those madly foaming waters rushing downwards with terrific force into an ever-seething cauldron below. Slowly and sadly the spectators separate. A fellow mortal has gone from among them.

Reader, it is impossible for you to have read this narrative without interest in the fate of young Ebert, without painful regret that so hard a struggle for life should have been in vain. Let me remind you that the scene described suggests important thought and inquiry about yourself.

Are you awake to your danger? Alas! there are those whom nothing rouses. Warnings and entreaties have no effect upon them. They live and die in a state of spiritual insensibility. But you are not among such, I hope. Rather, like young Ebert, you know your danger, and are struggling, with all the energy and earnestness of an awakened soul, for life. You plead for mercy; you cry for salvation; you ask for power to cast yourself by simple faith on the Saviour. Your struggle shall not be in vain. Not only is Jesus "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him," but He is as willing as He is able. He died that His precious blood might cleanse us from all sin, and He lives to enable sinners by the grace of His Holy Spirit to believe on Him and be saved.

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The Chief Shepherd.



"I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD."

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The Chief Shepherd.

In the year 1662, many ministers in England were compelled to quit their pulpits. Mr. Peter Ince, one of these, was content, for his livelihood, to tend sheep, and as a shepherd entered the service of Mr. Grove, a rich man in Wiltshire. His master's wife was taken dangerously ill, and the parish minister was sent for to pray with her. When the messenger came, he was just going out with the hounds, and sent word that he would come when the hunt was over. On Mr. Grove expressing much displeasure, one of the servants said, "Sir, our shepherd, if you will send for him, can pray very well: we have often heard him at prayer in the field." He was immediately sent for, and his employer asking him whether he ever did or could pray, the shepherd replied, "God forbid, sir, I should live one day without prayer." He was then desired to pray with the sick lady, which he did so appropriately, and with such fervour of devotion, as greatly astonished her husband and all the family who were present.

When they arose from their knees, Mr. Grove said to him: "Your language and manner discover you to be a very different person from what your present appearance indicates. Pray tell me who and what you are, and what was your situation in life before you came into my service." The shepherd answered that he was one of the ministers who had lately been ejected from the Church. On hearing this, Mr. Grove exclaimed, "Then you shall be my spiritual shepherd."

Happy are they who, in reference to One infinitely greater than any of the servants of God on earth, take up the sentiment of this exclamation and say to the Lord of glory, Lord Jesus, art Thou a Shepherd? then Thou shalt be my Shepherd.

Few of the illustrations borrowed from earthly things to represent the Saviour's excellences are more pleasing than that of a shepherd. This character was given Him in prophecy: "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom."[1] He said of Himself, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."[2] He is elsewhere described as "the *great* Shepherd of the sheep," and as the *chief* Shepherd who will appear and honour His faithful servants with a crown of glory.[3]

As the good Shepherd, He gathers His flock from the wilderness of this world. "All we like sheep have gone astray," have forsaken God, and wandered in the destroyer's way, but Christ came "to seek and to save that which was lost." In His parable of the shepherd and the lost sheep, He describes His own conduct.[4]

[1] Isaiah xl. 11. [2] John x. 11. [3] 1 Peter v. 4. [4] Luke xv. 3.

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Thus He seeks the lost and undone, and gathers them into His fold and under His care. Of them He says, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life."[1] Reader, is He your Shepherd?—do you hear His voice and follow Him?

The shepherd had to provide for the wants of his flock. Therefore David, himself once a shepherd, beautifully says, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me."[2] Thus the Lord Jesus makes, by His Spirit, and in His word and ordinances, ample provision for the comfort and support of His people. His precepts guide, His warnings caution, His promises cheer, and His love supports them. His care attends them through life, and goes with them through the valley of death.

It was the shepherd's duty to protect as well as feed his flock. Jacob, referring to his care of Laban's flock, said, "In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes."[3] David, when watching his father's flock, encountered in its defence a lion and a bear.[4] The Lord Jesus, as the good Shepherd, protects the souls committed to His care. "My sheep shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." "This is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing."[1] The weak and the strong are the objects of His care, and the feeble lambs have His peculiar sympathy. "He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom." Imagine that you see an Eastern shepherd leading his flock to some green pasture and refreshing stream; but there, observe a little lamb too feeble to keep up with the flock. What does the shepherd? He neglects not the little helpless creature, but, displaying peculiar care, takes it up, and holds it in his arms. This is an expressive emblem of the care of the blessed Jesus over the feeblest of His flock.

It must not be forgotten that this flock is his own. He makes a marked distinction between a shepherd, who is only a hireling, and one to whom the sheep belongs. The flock Christ guards and feeds are all His own. They are given Him by the Father; are bought with His precious blood; are quickened by His Spirit, and are gathered to Him as their Saviour.

He who is thus a Shepherd, is the "*great* Shepherd of the sheep;"[2] great in Divine glory, majesty, and power; great as the Creator of angels and men, of earth and heaven; and great as the Redeemer, by the infinite efficacy of His atoning sacrifice, which secures the salvation of His people.

He is also described as the *chief* Shepherd. He is chief in the glories of His nature and person, and the chief in superintending care; He is the Shepherd of shepherds; He watches over the souls of those who have to watch for others. His

[1] John x. 27.
[2] Psalm xxiii. 2, 4.
[3] Genesis xxxi. 40.
[4] 1 Samuel xvii. 35, 36.

[1] John x. 28; vi. 39.
[2] Hebrews xiii. 20.

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servants watch over a few of His flock; but He, at the same moment of time, watches over all His flock wherever scattered. The circumstances and the wants of His flock are very diversified; some are commencing, and others finishing their course, but according to their wants are His blessings; and to every one His promise is, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."[1] The care of His servants for His Church lasts but a few short years. Even apostles were soon laid among the dead, and their work was done. Not so Christ's work. He watches over His flock through successive ages, with never-dying care, and will continue this watchful care till the last of His sheep be gathered to His heavenly fold, and time shall be no longer. He is also chief in love. Warm was the love which glowed in the apostles' hearts;[2] but it was weak and cold compared with His. They left no heavenly throne for the objects of their care; and, much as they suffered, never suffered misery like His. Is He who is thus the good, the great, the chief Shepherd, yours? The day of His coming will declare.

The chief Shepherd will at length appear as the worthy Judge of the world. "The Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him. Then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth His sheep from the goats." He "shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire." "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen." He will thus descend from heaven amidst awful grandeur and terrible glory; and these "heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." The voice of the archangel and the trump of God will be heard, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, all the dead in Christ will be raised, and all the living saints be changed. On that great and dreadful, but joyful day, He will appear to perfect the happiness of His redeemed flock, and to honour His humble friends: "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe;" and then will He say to them on His right hand, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" while the awful doom of those on His left will be, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."[1]

[1] Hebrews xiii. 5.
[2] Philippians ii. 17; 2 Timothy ii. 10.

[1] Matthew xxv. 34, 41.

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Are You Insured?



SNATCHED FROM THE FLAMES!

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Are You Insured?



An agent of a fire insurance company set out with a friend to visit several persons, in the hope of prevailing on them to insure. He called on many, and used his best efforts to impress on them the prudence and desirableness of insuring.

Some few were persuaded by him, and immediately gave him the necessary information for effecting a policy. By others various objections were made; among the rest, one said, "Oh, it is to your interest to get us to insure, you are paid for it."

"Ah, well," said another, "I must take my chance; after all, if a fire should occur, it might not be so very bad; there are plenty of engines nowadays."

It was surprising to find, in some instances, that even the little attention and trouble that would be necessary were made a reason against insuring, though it was admitted that certainly it would be a good thing to be insured.

"I am fully aware of the importance of the thing," said one; "you know, sir, I have been thinking of it for some time past; I'll not trouble you to call again; my new arrangements will be completed in the course of a few weeks, and then, you may rely on it, I will see you immediately."

"Really," said another, "I am hardly willing to incur the expense; you know my insurance would be a hazard, and would cost me a great deal; and after all I might never be benefited by it."

Another suggested that it was possible the company might fail; "And then," said he, "I should be worse off than now; I should be uninsured, and lose my money as well."

Other excuses were made. The friend departed, wishing the agent better encouragement in his work. Some months had elapsed, when on re-entering the town, the agent's friend perceived the engines just returning from a fire, and, seeing the agent, he inquired of him whether it had been anything very serious.

"Oh, it was a tremendous fire!" he replied, "on the premises of poor Adams, the oilman; the loss is very great, and his property is totally destroyed."

The friend remarked, "I suppose it falls heavy on your company."

"Ah!" cried the agent, "I was going to say I wish it did; no, poor fellow, he has lost his all, for he was not insured."

"Not insured! Why, when you called on him three months ago, he all but engaged to effect a policy within a few weeks."

"Yes, poor man, he has been delaying for many months, and now it is too late."

Reader, are *you* insured? You may be ready severely to blame these persons who raised such trivial objections against insuring, and to say that you would on no account be guilty of such imprudence. So far, good. It is right that you should

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take due care of your temporal possessions. But have you ever considered that you have property of infinitely greater value? You may have much or little of this world's goods, but without doubt you have a soul, and He who gave you your soul has pronounced it to be of greater value than the whole world.

Now, have you cared for your immortal soul?

You would not be so imprudent as to neglect the insurance of your earthly goods, and is it possible that your soul, which is worth more than anything and everything else, is forgotten? Yes, it is possible, and if it should be the case, what reason can you give that you have not paid attention to your soul and its safety? Have you anything better to offer than objections of much the same nature as those put forth by the persons who would not be persuaded to insure? If their infatuation was great, yours is greater in the same proportion as your soul is more valuable than their property; and remember, too, that your soul will live for ever, whereas in a few years it will matter nothing to them whether they had property or not, as they will have no "more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun."[1]

Have you ever said or felt, when the subject of religion has been presented to you by ministers, "I do not much heed what they say, they are hired to say it," and so reject their message? But can you afford to risk the salvation of your soul because you suppose others may have a wrong motive? Should you not at least consider the matter, and see whether the message they bring, and which purports to be of vast importance to you, be true?

When those who love your soul endeavour to set before you your sinfulness, and the horrors of the everlasting state of the impenitent, and to entreat you to seek the salvation of your soul, do you reply, "Well, I am a great sinner, but I must take my chance; God is very merciful, and I am in hopes it will not be quite so bad as you think?" Oh! do not rest in such a delusion. God *is* merciful, He delights in mercy; but He will show mercy only in His own way—only through Jesus. "Repent and believe the gospel," acknowledge that you deserve nothing better than death and hell, but plead the merits of Christ—take Him as your Saviour, your Atoning Sacrifice; then, and not till then, may you trust and rejoice in the mercy of God.

But can you think it too much trouble to *attend* to the things which make for your eternal peace? What! did the Son of God come down from heaven, and take upon Him the form of a man, yea, of a servant, to suffer and die for us, and shall we think it too much trouble to attend to His gracious offers of peace?

Perhaps, however, you say, "I am fully aware of the importance of religion; I made up my mind some time ago that I would attend to it; but I have a good deal of business on my hands just now: I shall be more at leisure soon, and then——" Oh! wait not for that time! Very likely you will never feel yourself to be more at leisure; on the contrary, you will probably get more and more entangled in the cares and business of life. When you are least expecting

[1] Ecclesiastes ix. 6.

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it, you may hear the voice saying, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee:"[1] "For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them." Therefore, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."[2]

Are you unwilling to make the sacrifices that religion would require of you? Are you in the midst of pleasures which you must give up, of gay companions, who would forsake you if you should become religious, or of pursuits which you are conscious would be far from consistent in one in earnest for his soul's salvation? Do you fear that you might lose business, and so exchange plenty for poverty! You do well to count the cost; but let it be done fairly and thoroughly. Count the cost of holding fast all these enjoyments to the neglect of your soul; remember that the "pleasures of sin," however sweet you may find them now, "are but for a season," and if you cannot give them up, you cannot have the "fulness of joy," and the "pleasures for evermore" which are "at God's right hand," or the "crown of glory which fadeth not away." Your "riches may take to themselves wings and flee away," but you have the offer of "durable riches." It is true that they who will "live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution;" it is probable that if you become a Christian you will pass through much affliction; but "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed."

You will not make the objection that after all you may not be benefited if you attend to your soul's safety. It is indeed by no means certain, on the contrary, it may not be very probable, that your earthly dwelling will take fire, and any of your possessions here be consumed, but it *is* certain that death will come sooner or later, and "after death the judgment;" "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ;" the wicked "shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

But perhaps you can truly say already, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him."[1] If it be so, happy are you. Then the fire that destroys the world cannot touch you, for your treasure is in heaven. You may indeed rejoice in your safety. Yes, for "when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up," the Christian, "standing on the ashes of the universe," may exclaim—"I have lost nothing. My treasure is untouched; my home is secure—and secure for ever!"

[1] Luke xii. 20. [2] Ecclesiastes ix. 10, 12.

[1] 2 Timothy i. 12.

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The Light of Godliness.



"OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES AND SUCKLINGS THOU HAST PERFECTED PRAISE."

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The Light of Godliness.

Some years ago, a minister, spending an evening with some of his flock, related the following anecdote:—

A story is told of a thief, who, returning early one summer's morning with valuables he had stolen from a house during the night, found himself so weary that he lay down under a hedge and fell asleep. The sun was shining brightly when he was awakened by the merry voice of a child in a field on the other side of the hedge. He could see that she was filling her little pinafore with flowers; and, as if the joyous feelings of her heart must break forth in sound, she began singing a little hymn she had learned:

"Lord, look upon a little child,
By nature sinful, rude, and wild;
Oh! put Thy gracious hands on me,
And make me all I ought to be.

Make me Thy child—a child of God,
Washed in my Saviour's precious blood;
And my whole soul from sin set free,
A little vessel full of Thee."

The childish voice, the sincerity and simplicity of the child, touched the feelings of the unhappy man, and recalled to his mind the days when he had knelt in prayer at his mother's knee. His heart was softened, and as he wept he prayed, and when he arose he at once went back to the house from whence he had stolen the articles, and restored them to their lawful owner; thus giving proof of repentance that was sincere.

The gentleman he had robbed was a Christian. On hearing the man's confession and resolution to forsake the path of destruction, he kindly provided employment for him, and rejoiced greatly in his conversion, the reality of which was proved by his after life and conversation.

The minister ended by saying that, without himself knowing the facts, he had no reason to doubt their truth.

George Oliver, a highly respectable elderly man, who had seemed touched as he listened, exclaimed, "It must be true, sir! I feel it to be true; it was something so very like it that was the means of stopping me on the road to destruction. The prayer of a child brought conviction to my heart, when I looked on the prayers of men, and the preaching of God's ministers, as hypocrisy and time-serving."

At the request of the party present, George Oliver explained what he alluded to. "You see, friends, I lived far away from this in my younger days, in a distant part of Dorsetshire. I was a working man, but was well to do in the world. The cottage I lived in was my own; and as I had no children, it did not require very hard work to provide for my wife and myself. We married for love, but somehow we did not live happily together. Finding my home uncomfortable, I spent my spare hours at the ale-

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house. There I sat smoking my pipe, and sipping ale, and chatting with any chance traveller that came in. The variety of persons I met amused me, and, I thought, made up for the loss of the friendship of some of my neighbours, who rather avoided my society, as my bad habits grew worse and worse.

"My neighbours kindly reasoned with me sometimes. I remember one begging me to refrain at least on Sundays, and to go with my wife to public worship. He unfortunately added, 'Even in the eye of the world it would be more respectable.' In the mood in which I then was, this gave me a pretext to reproach him. 'Yes! there it is,' I replied—'respectable in the world; that is the meaning of your church-going—to gain a good name—to curry favour with your employers. I depend on no man's favour; I do as I like. And if the truth were known, there is many a one within the church walls no better than I am. Show me the man who has nothing to gain by his prayers and his piety, and I will listen to him.' These were really my thoughts, though it was vexation that led me to speak them out so plainly.

"One evening I was sitting in my accustomed corner in the bar of the ale-house, talking with the landlady as she bustled about some household business. Suddenly there was a tap at the house-door, the latch was raised, and the door pushed open a little way. Turning round, the landlady called out, 'Oh, Jem, is it you? Open the door and come in.'

"A man entered, followed by his wife and children, one about seven, and the other about five years old. Jem carried a basket filled with wooden-ware cups, spoons, and platters; and a bundle of long rushes for mending chairs was slung across his shoulders. His wife had also a basket, and each of the children carried a few rushes. The whole party looked cold and weary, and very poor and thinly clad.

"Jem asked whether they could have a supper of potatoes, for which he would pay honestly, and whether she would permit them to sleep on some clean straw in her barn or stable. She replied, 'I know you always do pay honestly for what you get; I will see how I can manage.'

"I watched all that was doing from my snug corner. The mistress showed them a spot where they might leave their bundles, and invited them to sit down by the kitchen fire, while she prepared the potatoes. The mother placed the youngest child on her lap, took off his shoes and rubbed his little feet with her hands, while the elder seated himself on the floor close beside her. At first they all sat silent, but as the children got warmed and rested they gradually became playful and talkative.

"As the landlady approached where I sat to fetch something she wanted, I asked who they were. 'That they are honest folk, who come this way once a year or so, looking for the little odd jobs of work they can get, is all I know about them. I suppose when they are at home they make the wooden articles they carry about for sale. I am too busy to inquire much into such people's affairs, so I don't know where they come from.'

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"When the steaming bowl of potatoes was put down on the table, the poor children clapped their hands for joy; and then the eldest, on a sign from his father, said, in a clear voice, 'Heavenly Father, bless us in the use of these Thy gifts, and make us thankful, for Christ's sake;' the others saying, Amen. They all began their supper with an eagerness which showed they had long been without food.

"One of the boys cast a wistful glance at a vessel of milk that was within sight; but his father, as if answering the look, said, 'Not to-day, Jemmy; I have not earned enough to-day to give you milk. Be thankful for the good potatoes and a drink of water.'

"When they had eaten every morsel that had been set before them, the child returned thanks in a tone and with a look of such truth and feeling, as impressed me with a certainty that his prayer and the Amen of the others were spoken, not for form's sake, but from the heart.

"After they had retired to the barn, where the landlady had given them leave to rest for the night, I sat for a few moments and then left the house. As I passed the barn, I heard the man's voice, and could not help stopping to listen. He was praying; returning thanks for the mercies shown to him and his family that day, and still more for the knowledge of salvation through the blood of Christ, and asking for grace to enable them to walk in the ways of godliness. When all was silent I walked on, not, as you might imagine, humbled and softened, but vexed and irritated. I felt as if I had been caught in my own trap. I remembered saying, if I could see religion that I felt to be pure and not put on for human applause or gain, I would listen to its professor; and what could I say now? That child's prayer had touched me, the father's voice in the barn had brought conviction to my mind; but still I was unwilling to yield. I passed a restless, unhappy night; but before morning I resolved to be a fool no longer. I arose early and returned to the barn to seek for Jem and his family. They had, however, already left the place.

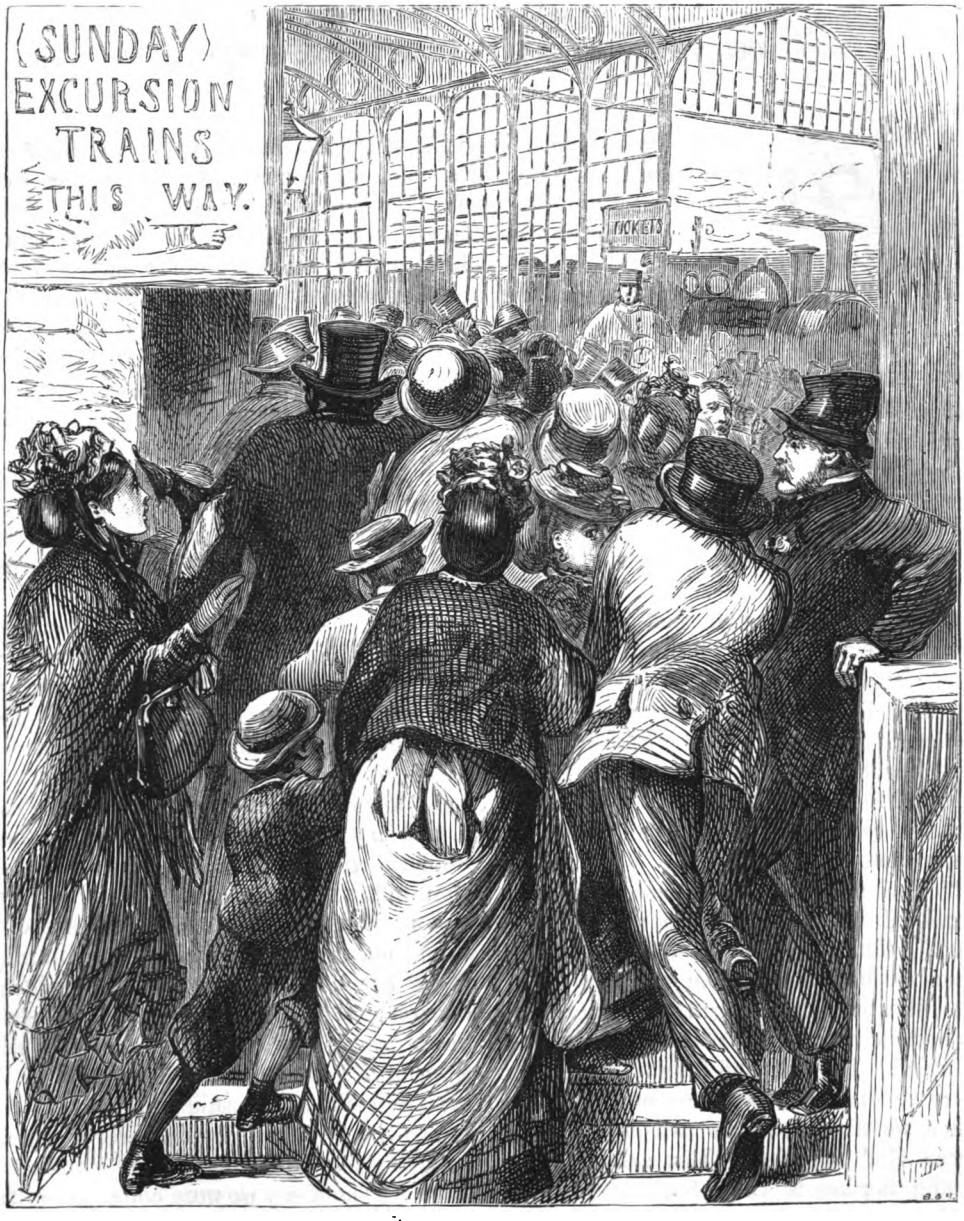
"If I am no better now than I was in those days, at least I have more light to see my sinfulness; and the first ray of light that dawned on my soul was from the prayer of that little child for a blessing on the meal of potatoes.

"Jem and his wife are now old people. They have a little shop in a village. The eldest boy is a farrier, and the youngest lives with them in the intervals of his trade as a licensed hawker. They have gone on most respectably in the fear and love of God all their lives."

The minister suspected that George Oliver had had some hand in establishing them in the shop. He said nothing of it, however, but made a few remarks on the influence that even one act may have on our fellow-men, and how careful it should make us, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to walk always as in the sight of God, with a single eye to His glory.

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THE PATCHED COAT; OR, THE SUNDAY TRIP.



HOW I CAME BY THE PATCH.

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The Patched Coat;

OR, THE SUNDAY TRIP INTERRUPTED.



"Do you know what I heard a man call you, Tom, yesterday?"

"No. What did he call me?"

"A man I was working with wanted to say something about you, and he could not call your name to mind; indeed, I don't know that he ever knew your name, for he is but newly come here; so what do you think he called you? He called you the man with the patch in his coat."

Tom Smith smiled, but said nothing.

"I know he meant you," John Jones continued, "for you've had a patch in your Sunday coat ever since I knew you, Tom: how did it come there?"

"I don't mind telling you, John, if you want to know. I often think about that patch, though I do not know that I ever told anybody about it before."

John Jones was all attention, and his mate went on as follows:—

"You may be sure that, with my family, I don't often get a new Sunday coat. That coat with the patch has been my best these seven or eight years. Yes, it is just about eight years ago that I had it new, for it was when I was married. My wife and I had both begun to serve God before we were married; and when we did marry, it was our wish to serve God together. But we were but young beginners then, both of us, and not so steadfast as we should have been. Still, there was one thing we had both of us made up our minds to, and that was to keep holy the Sabbath day. We began to go to a place of worship regularly, and I may say our Sundays were our happiest days. Yes, that they were, for all that I'm going to tell you.

"Now there was a chap working in the same yard with me at that time—a nice, steady, well spoken chap he was. His name was Will Johnson. But I doubt he had not much religion. However, we were great friends, he and I; for most of the others were great drinkers and swearers, and such like, and we were not of that sort, either of us.

"Well, one Saturday Will showed me a paper which said there was an excursion train going to take people down to the sea and back for half-a-crown. He said he and his wife had made up their minds to go, if I and my wife would go too. I told him I couldn't think of it. I and my wife were used to keep the Sabbath differently from that, and we shouldn't think it right. He said there was no harm in it for once, or he himself would not do it. We could go to church, if we liked, when we got to the place, and we could be as quiet as we pleased down by the sea, and it would do us all a world of good, and no harm at all. I can't tell you all he said; but the end of it was that we *went*. I remember it was a beautiful day in the height of summer; but yet I can't say we were comfortable in our minds. I know I wasn't, and I don't

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think my wife was. I say we *went*, and so we did as far as from our house to the station, but we never got any further; we had no sea after all. We met Will and his wife at the station all right. But what a crowd of people there was, to be sure! Talk of quiet! there was not much quiet *there*. And Sunday! it was no more like Sunday than I don't know what. Such a noise, and such pushing and shoving, and some laughing, and some angry, and all bustle and din. I said to my wife, we would get out of it all, and get into a carriage at once, all ready to start. But sooner said than done. Other folk wanted to get to the carriages too, and we had to squeeze our way along with them, till we were all hot and tired and flustered, before the trip was begun. Now I'm coming to my *coat*. We had to squeeze round a sharp corner to get at the train, and just there the crowd was worse than ever. I was jammed against the corner, and I did not see, and I could not have helped myself if I had, that there was a big nail sticking out of the wall just there. I didn't see it, but all of a sudden I heard something tear, and my wife called out, and I looked, and there was a great tear all down from my left shoulder, and the best part of one arm of my new coat was hanging down. We pushed out of the crowd as well as we could, and my poor wife was fit to cry, and I was mightily vexed myself. What was to be done? I could not go so. I hardly thought a minute. I did not even look to see where Will and his wife were. 'Come, let us go back again,' I said; and off we went home. I don't think we either of us spoke a word till we got there. People looked at my torn coat, and laughed, as we went along, and I felt ashamed to be seen so, and ashamed altogether. I never was so well pleased in all my life as I was when we got inside our own door. 'Thank God,' said I, 'thank God we're well out of that.' And my wife thanked God too. We knew we had done wrong. Yes, that we did. We knew it all along, in our hearts. But I trust God forgave us; and I know we learnt a lesson that day we've never forgotten. I never wear that coat but I think of that day. I'm not a bit sorry for the coat being torn. I think it was God himself who stopped me so. We've never set out Sunday-pleasuring since that; and, please God, we never will.

"So now, mate, you know the history of my coat. My wife's a good patcher, isn't she? Take it altogether, I don't know that I would change the patched coat for a new one. It humbles me to be sure; but it makes me thankful too, and I think somehow it helps to keep me right."

Do not despise this story of a patched coat, reader. There is often more in trifles than people think. Tom Smith thought it was God that stopped him thus from breaking the Sabbath; was he not right? And was it not a good thing for him to be stopped anyhow? If he had gone pleasuring that Sunday, perhaps he might have gone another, and another. And who knows that he might not have become a constant Sabbath-breaker, and given up serving God altogether? True, it was but a torn coat that stopped him; but God works by various means, and sometimes by what seem mere trifles. How thankful we should be, when God, in His mercy, stops us from doing wrong!

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Have *you* anything, a coat, a tool, a book, or anything else, that reminds you of doing wrong, or of being checked in it, or stopped from it? Do you ever go past a place, where once you sinned, or where you were on the point of sinning, when something happened to prevent you? Do you ever meet a person who was once your companion in sin, or with whom you were very near falling into sin?

These are things that ought to be thought of; things that remind us of our own falls or temptations, and of God's deliverance. Perhaps the saved will look back on such things even from heaven itself. Surely then we ought to think of them *now*. For there we shall be safe, and shall not stand in need of warning and helps any more; but now we do stand in need of them continually. Tom Smith's patched coat was a help and a warning to him. Probably many of us have such helps and warnings, if we would think of them. What a comfort it is, that for all our past sins we have a Saviour's blood to go to; and that, sinful and weak as we still are, we have the promise of the Holy Spirit to help and sanctify us! How should we get rid of the burden of our sins past but for that precious blood? How should we meet temptation but for that Holy Spirit? Reader, do you feel your need? Do you pray?

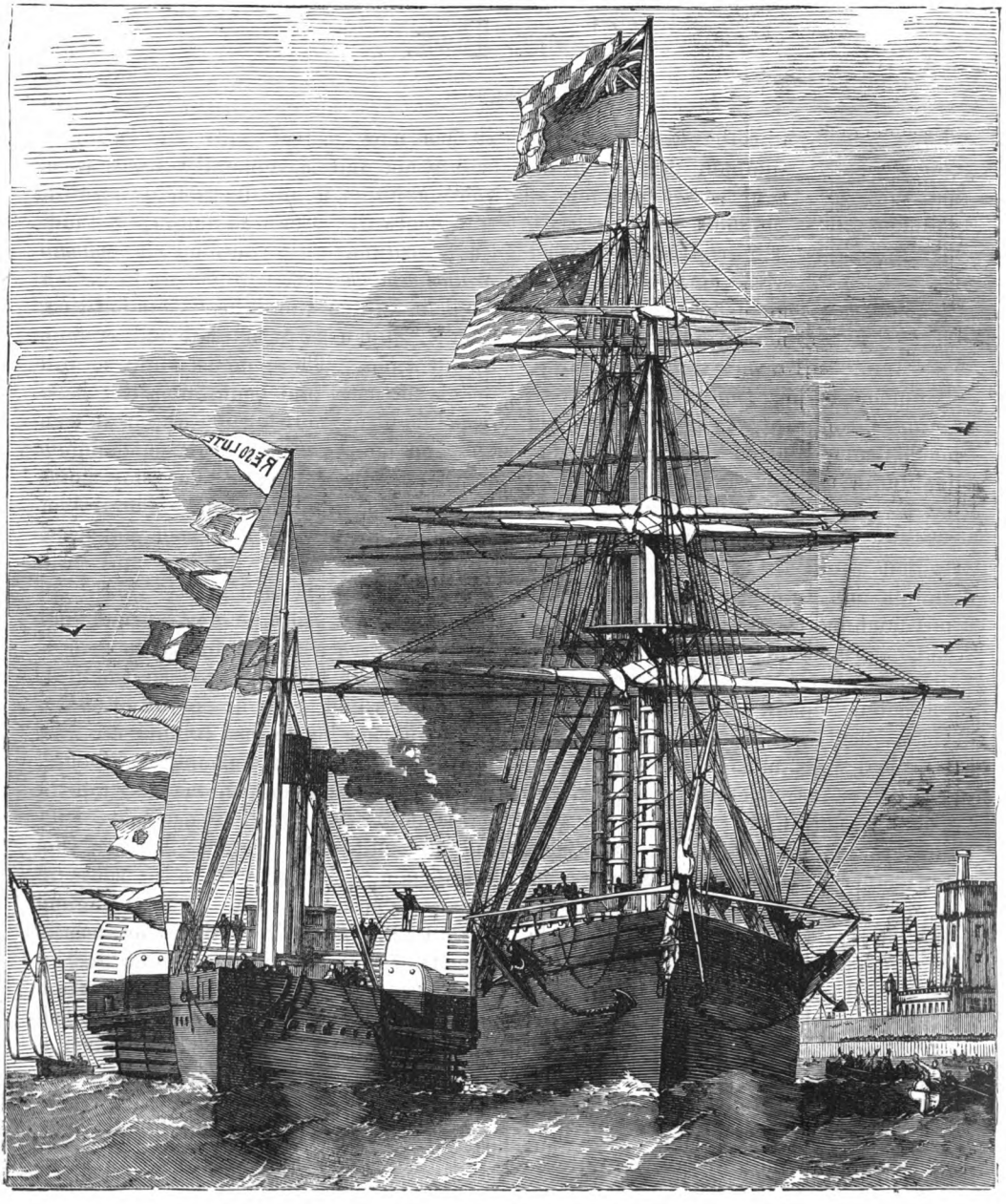
Ah! those Sunday excursion trains How many do they lead into sin! How many broken Sabbaths, how many wounded consciences, do they cause! Whatever *men* may say, judge of a Sunday excursion train by the Bible, and it cannot be anything but wrong. The simple question is this—Will you go by the Bible, or not? And can it be denied that the Bible is that by which we *are* to go? It is the Bible that tells us of a Saviour; it is the Bible that speaks of mercy, love, grace, and salvation; it is the Bible that points out the way to eternal happiness; it is the Bible that tells us how we ought to live; it is the Bible by which we shall be judged; it is the Bible that says, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."

Reader, be honest. Judged by the word of God, is the Sunday excursion train right or wrong?

This is the day which God hath blest,
The brightest of the seven,
Type of that everlasting rest
The saints enjoy in heaven.

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Good-Bye.



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Good-Bye.

On a bright afternoon in the summer, I saw a beautiful vessel pass out of the dock gates at Hull. Her decks were crowded with emigrants, going forth, with hearts full of hope and industry, to settle in a foreign country. All round the pier and dock-sides were standing groups of their relatives and friends, some cheerful, some weeping, come to get the last look at those whom they loved. As the gallant ship slowly passed by, hundreds of hands and handkerchiefs were eagerly waved in token of farewell, and from deck and shore were heard loud and repeated shouts of "Good-bye, Good-bye!"

Passing some time since along a street in London, I heard the measured tramp of many feet approaching. A battalion of soldiers, their polished arms gleaming in the sun, marched gaily past to the music of a military band. They were going to endure hardships, and fight their country's battles, in a distant land, and few of those brave men would probably survive to return and tell the tale. Nevertheless, their spirits were high as they passed on to their destination, and crowds of people thronged round them to wish them "Good-bye."

So naturally does that word come to the lips, when we are called upon to part from those whom we esteem and love. But what is the meaning of the phrase? It has now passed into an ordinary salutation, and is generally used as a mere expression of affectionate interest and goodwill. Few who employ it know that, originally, it implied a *solemn prayer and blessing*. If it were to be set forth in full, it would be "God be with you." So it used to be said and written in old times. Those pious words, so full of earnestness, and containing the best wish for time and eternity which we can offer for another, have been so changed in the course of years, that they have lost their original meaning. The prayer "God be with you" has been narrowed down by contracted spelling and pronunciation into "Good-bye."

In a general sense, it may be said that God is always with us, for He is everywhere present, and observes the smallest incidents which occur in the life of every man, whether he be just or unjust. But in a more particular and spiritual sense, He is the chosen companion and guide of those only who are His pardoned and adopted children. He may be with the unregenerate, but they have no sense of His presence, and hold no communion with Him. Thus it is that the apostle speaks of such as being "without God in the world,"[1] because, spiritually, they know Him not, and do not feel their need of His company and friendship. When a sense of that need is wrought in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, then they perceive their utter loneliness—then

[1] Ephesians ii. 12.

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they see how sin has separated between them and God[1] — then they desire earnestly to seek His face, and draw near to His gracious presence. The way thither is plain and simple. Christ is the medium of access through which, by the Spirit, they may come to the Father. Through faith in His atonement, they who sometime were far off are brought nigh to the Holy One. Then, being pardoned, justified, adopted into God's family, His company with them is felt, appreciated, and enjoyed; it gives them peace of mind and great confidence to know that their heavenly Father is so near to them. "God be with you:" whilst generally this wish will be regarded as referring only to God's providential care, the Christian will consider it as a prayer for special communications of grace and mercy, and for God's pardoning and sustaining presence with those for whom it is offered. Think of your parting salutation in this meaning, and see how much is contained in it.

"God be with you," and you will have the *best company* that a traveller in this mortal pilgrimage can have upon his journey. There is plenty of company to be had, but there is little that is worthy of trust. Light-hearted and mirthful companions will not be wanting, but their laughter may be of that kind which is soon turned to heaviness. Many will profess their readiness to give you help and guidance, but their help may be a great hindrance to you, and their guidance may lead you wrong. But if God be with you, He will be true to fulfil His promise; loving, to give you comfort; wise, to direct your course; constant, to help you to the end.

"God be with you," and you will be *safe*. It is a seductive world, and snares are thickly spread to catch the unwary. He that thinketh he standeth is liable at any time to fall. A man may shut his eyes, and go blindly on in an uncertain and perilous course; but he is not in less danger because he will not see it. If God be your guide, you will be kept from evil, and upheld in the times of weakness and trial. Your troubles may be as many as before, but you will have grace to bear them cheerfully; the dangers which beset your path may be quite as numerous, but if you follow your gracious Leader, He will find a way for your escape.

"God be with you," and you will be *victorious* in your spiritual conflicts. You cannot go far in the Christian course without finding that there are many foes before you, and that you will often have to fight in order to make good your ground. Open and well-planned assaults will have to be met and resisted. Sudden attacks will break upon you from unexpected quarters, and the enemy will frequently lie in wait to take away your soul. But let God be with you, to furnish you with weapons from the Divine armoury, and to give you strength in the day of battle; and the victory will certainly be yours. If your sufficiency be of God, you can dare, and do, and suffer all things for His holy name, and by His sustaining power.

"God be with you," and you will be *holy*.[1] He is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works. They who

[1] Isaiah lix. 2.

[1] 2 Corinthians vi. 16.

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have His blessed companionship are made like unto Him. Two cannot walk together except they be agreed; and God will not tarry long with the heart which does not desire holiness. Other companions, human like yourselves, may be amiable and pleasant; your affections may cling to them with great warmth and ardour; yet they may not be holy themselves, or if they are, they have not the power of making you holy. But if God be your companion, He will purify your heart, and renew you in His spiritual image.

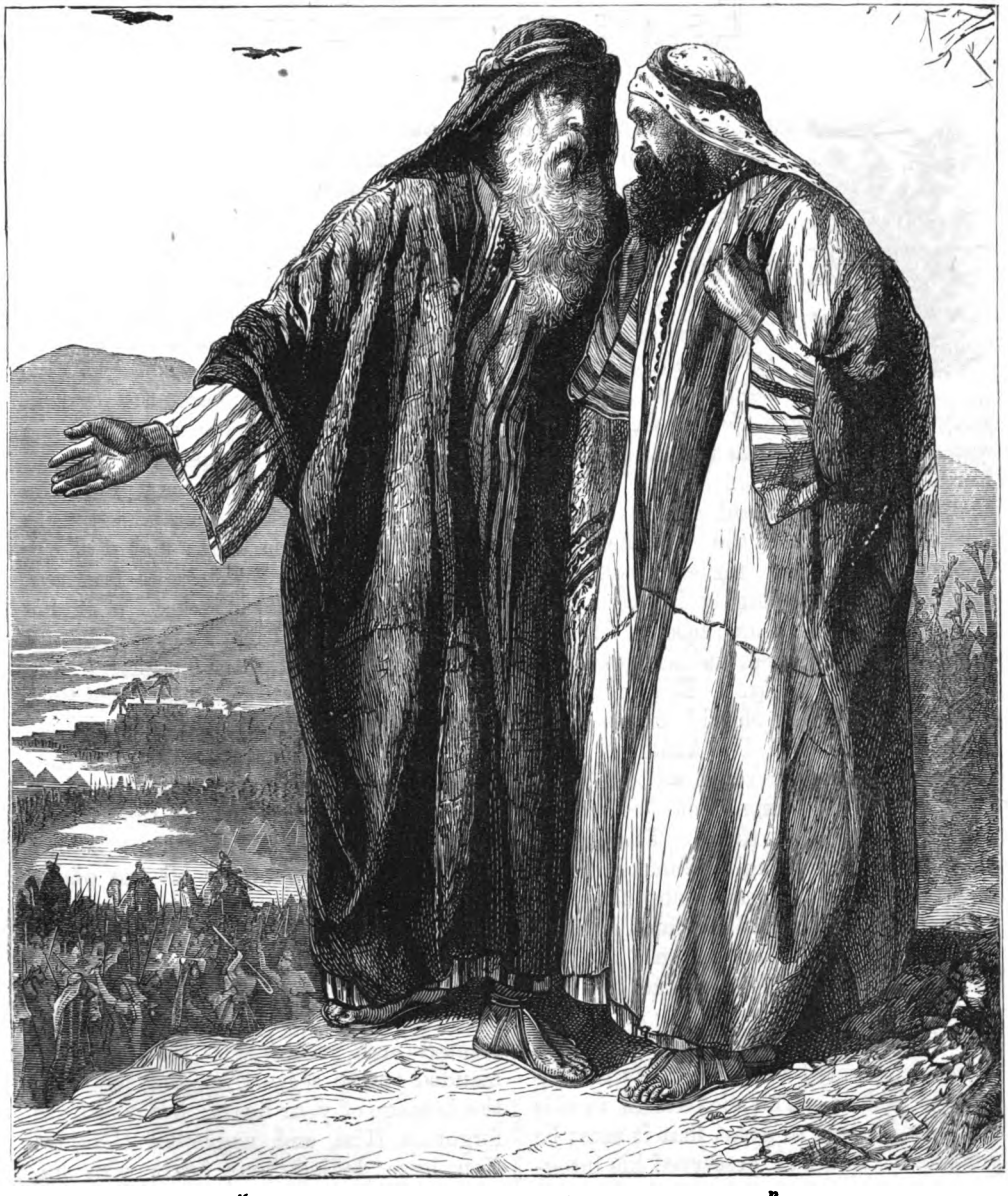
"God be with you," and you will be *happy*. Nothing lightens the heart more than a cheerful and loving companion. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." Sympathy in sorrow is a precious balm; and help in trouble is doubly welcome when it comes from one whom you love. Yet there are many sorrows in which no human friend can help you, and many heart-troubles which no earthly sympathy can share. But let God be with you as your friend, and He will assist you to bear the burdens which otherwise you would have to carry alone. He will gladden you in the midst of your affliction, and make you happy in the darkest hour. Yes, even in that last and most dreadful season, when the valley of the shadow of death shall be opening before you, you will fear no evil, if you can only say, "Thou, O Lord, art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

Such are some of the wishes expressed by the word "Good-bye." Reader, have you ever wished to have God for a companion? Are the world and sin so precious to you that you would rather have their company than the company of God? If you make that choice, you will here or hereafter repent it. Sin and death go hand in hand; and if you have the one for a partner, you must have the other. Draw nigh, with sincere penitence and humble faith, to the mercy-seat, and pray to God, for the sake of His dear Son, to pardon your past sins, and to give you His Holy Spirit's grace for the future. Ask Him to be your guide and companion in this world, and your portion in the world to come; and if you ask aright, your prayer will be granted. So this parting wish will be fully realized in your own experience, and in that bright land, where parting words are unknown, "God *will* be with you" for ever and ever.

Oh may His Spirit guide our feet,
Inspire our hearts with love,
Then though on earth no more we meet,
We all shall meet above.

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"Escape for thy Life!"



"THEN LOT CHOSE HIM ALL THE PLAIN OF JORDAN."

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"Escape for thy Life!"



This exhortation was given to Lot on the eve of a most tremendous judgment, from which he was miraculously delivered. The inhabitants of Sodom dwelt in a very rich country. "The plain of Jordan, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, was well watered everywhere, as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt." It was also under a bright and genial sky; so that the fruits of the climate would always reach their highest perfection. Yet these men, so highly favoured, were strangely ungrateful and base. "The men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." How mournful, that God's bounty should be so often grossly abused, and His kindness made the occasion of aggravated sin!

In course of time, Lot became an inhabitant of the town. Those who know the bewitching influence of sin will think that he acted most foolishly in placing himself and his family in the midst of so much temptation. He was led away by the "lust of the eye" to choose the well-watered plains of Jordan for his abode, though thus he would become connected with the guilty inhabitants of Sodom. The wickedness in this city now became so great that it must be punished. Lot had preserved his integrity. The sins of the people grieved him. He was "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." "His righteous soul was troubled from day to day with their unlawful deeds." Therefore the Lord would deliver him, and as many of his family as could be persuaded to go out with him. He was reluctant to leave the city, for there were still in it some of his own children; and how could he give them up? Here we learn the evil of mingling with improper society: even should we ourselves escape unhurt, which is not at all probable, it may prove the destruction of those who are exceedingly dear to us. But mark the mercy of the Lord towards Lot: "While he lingered, the men [the angels] laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him; and they brought him forth and set him without the city." And then comes the exhortation; mark its emphasis, and the extreme danger in which Lot himself then stood: "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

Reader, your life is in danger; the precious life of your soul! There is a God in heaven by whom you have been created and preserved. He has commanded you to serve Him, and pay Him the homage of your heart; but you have forgotten Him, and neglected His law. You have defiled your heart with sin, and indulged in many wicked practices.

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Your own conscience condemns you, and declares that in the sight of God you are guilty. All your life long, by day and by night, when alone and in company, His eye has rested on you. He has read every thought, feeling, and desire. He has marked every word and action. And in the roll of heaven, every sin, with all its aggravation, is recorded:—the Sabbaths you have broken, the offers of mercy you have neglected, the falsehoods you have told, the oaths you have wickedly sworn, the dishonesties you may have committed, and every stain upon your character, whether open or secret—all are written down in characters that cannot fade. . . . This God is a jealous God. He is a consuming fire. He will come in awful grandeur, and call you to His bar. He will say of you, if found impenitent there, "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." . . . This, reader, is your danger. That soul of yours, formed for the praise and worship of Jehovah, for the fellowship of holy and happy angels, and for the glories of God's presence—that soul is in danger of being cast into hell, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Escape, then, for thy life! Flee from this awful danger. Oh, flee! for your eternal all is at stake; and a moment may decide your state for ever!

You, perhaps, have already lingered in the plain; and are still in great danger of staying and looking behind you. Satan whispers in your ear, "How can you forsake your former companions—how can you give up old acquaintances?—how can you abandon endeared pursuits—how can you forego long-indulged pleasures—how can you act contrary to your irreligious relatives—how can you part with gains and wealth—how can you submit to the shame and self-denial of the cross?" These, and many other like suggestions, Satan will ply you with; and entreat you to pause, and put off your flight to a more convenient season. But what says the Word of God? "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain."

You must, if you would be saved, commence a resolute and determined course. There is nothing of so great value as your soul! There is nothing so important as eternal happiness. There is nothing so pressing and urgent as deliverance from eternal ruin. Turn your back, then, on the sinful pleasures of the world. Abandon its follies. Address yourself to the journey before you. "Stay not in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

Do you look about you, and ask, "To what mountain?" Behold yonder mountain, ever and anon burning and blazing with fire; covered with blackness and darkness, and surrounded with tempest. Listen to the sound of the trumpet and the voice of words. What are those words? Hark!—"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." Look at the assembled multitudes, trembling and quaking at the terrible sight. That mountain is Sinai, where God issues His law in awful majesty. That provides no asylum, no refuge for the sinner. . . . But, behold, on the other hand, another mount. The cloud of darkness is just withdrawing; the rays of heaven begin to shine upon "the place which is called

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Calvary." There God, reconciled, shows His face, and whispers pardon in the soft accents of mercy and love to every penitent sinner. Escape to that mount; and as you draw near you will behold One nailed to a cross. That One is the Son of God—His only begotten Son—His well-beloved Son; whom, because He so loved the world, He gave up to suffer, to bleed, and to die; that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. That gracious Being Himself so loved the world, that He came into it in human form—took to Himself "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh"—that, in a body like our own, He might bear the curse of a broken law in our stead. God has accepted His death as a sacrifice for our sin. Rejoice, then, that by grace, believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, you may find in Him a "balm for every wound, a cordial for your fears."—"Escape, then, to that mount, lest thou be consumed."

Unconverted reader, your danger is awful! No tongue can describe it. If you tarry where you are, destruction is certain; if you begin the journey and look back, you are not fit for the kingdom of heaven. "Remember Lot's wife." As Lot was flying, "his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." Beware of ever "looking back," and especially of "drawing back unto perdition." "Stay not in all the plain." Seek for grace to tear yourself from all the entanglements of sin, and to break through all its bonds. Rest not till, by the help of God's Holy Spirit, you have cast yourself at the feet of Christ—till your soul is purged from all its guilt by His blood—till you have found a sanctuary for your soul in His love, and have obtained peace and pardon through His sufferings unto death, and sanctification by the Holy Spirit. Till these ends are gained, you are in great danger. If you neglect this warning, and refuse this Saviour—if you still linger about your sins, and look back longingly after your carnal delights, though destruction may not come upon you immediately, it will at length, and, ERE LONG, overtake you with far more terror than the destruction of Sodom. May God in mercy prevent it; and, for the sake of His dear Son, grant you the Holy Spirit to lead you to the only refuge, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hasten, O sinner, *to be wise*,
And stay not for the morrow's sun;
The longer Wisdom you despise,
The harder is she to be won.

Oh hasten *mercy to implore*,
And stay not for the morrow's sun;
For fear thy season should be o'er
Before this evening's stage be run.

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THE LEPERS' QUARTER.



"WITHOUT THE CAMP SHALL HIS HABITATION BE."

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The Lepers' Quarter.



Close by one of the gates of modern Jerusalem, that by which travellers enter from the south-west, there is a village or hamlet peopled by lepers, which few visit without being sickened by the loathsome spectacles which are to be seen there. Dr. Thomson tells us how, on one occasion, when sauntering down the Jaffa road, he was startled and horrified by the sudden appearance of a crowd of diseased beggars. These were the inhabitants of the lepers' quarter, an unhappy race who have existed about Jerusalem from a remote period, and whose homes are fitly described as dens of corruption and death.

How far the disease which now bears the name of leprosy in Eastern lands is the same as that with which the laws of Moses have made us familiar, is a question with many. But whether we look at both or either, we shall find not a few points of instructive interest. Of all diseases, leprosy, ancient or modern, is probably the truest symbol of the spiritual disease which afflicts our nature. And, fearful and loathsome as it is, it does not give us a too darkly coloured picture of the true character and consequences of sin.

It is sin that has separated man from God, and that separates man from man. God is great, and we are little; God is mighty, and we are feeble; God is the Creator, and we are but creatures. But these differences produce no real separation. As a faithful Creator, as a good Father, the great God held loving fellowship with Adam, till Adam sinned. And, but for sin, he would hold loving fellowship with Adam's children. But our iniquities have separated between us and our God.

Sin separates us from one another, as well as from God. For sin is the transgression, not only of the law—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," but also of the law—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Man does not love his neighbour as himself. He breaks this law, as well as the law which requires him to love God with all his heart. Men are thus separated from one another by sin. The race, instead of forming one holy and loving family, is broken up by selfishness into myriads of fragments, each seeking its own with little regard to the welfare of others.

This separation of men from God and from one another is strikingly illustrated by the law of Moses. "He shall dwell alone," that law said of the leper; "without the camp shall his habitation be."[1] To this day, lepers in Eastern countries, when not obliged to live outside the city, have a separate abode assigned to them, and are shunned as unclean and dangerous. Among tent-dwelling Arabs, the leper is literally put out of the camp. As, by the ancient law, leprosy drove its poor

[1] Leviticus xiii. 46.

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victims from the sanctuary of God, and from the society of men; so sin—a more deadly evil still—separates man in spirit from his God, and in affection from his fellow-man.

The fearful virulence of the plague of leprosy is seen in its descent from generation to generation. "Newborn children of leprous parents," says the author to whom we have already referred, "are often as pretty and as healthy in appearance as any; but, by-and-by, its presence and working become visible in some of the signs described in the 13th of Leviticus."

"Who," continues this traveller, "can fail to find in all this a most affecting type of man's moral leprosy? Like it, too, this is hereditary. As surely as we have inherited it from our fathers, do we transmit it to our children." Notwithstanding all that is lovely and fair to look upon, "there is none righteous, no, not one." And if men were as sensitive to sin and as conscious of it as they are of outward disease, they would confess, with much self-abasement, that "there is no soundness in them."

In all the Bible references to leprosy, there is perhaps nothing more striking than the acknowledged difficulty of its cure. We read of a Syrian captain who was leprous, and who heard from an Israelitish captive maid, in his service, of a prophet in Israel who had power to heal him. Forthwith this valiant man, who, though great and honourable, was unhappy because he was a leper, proceeded from Damascus to Samaria, with a letter of introduction from the king of Syria to the king of Israel. The king of Israel was perplexed and alarmed on receiving this letter, and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me."[1]

In this we have a solemn lesson. Sin is incurable except by God Himself. Not all the skill and power of the world avail to "recover a man of this leprosy." God Himself must put forth His hand to heal, or we, spiritual lepers, must miserably perish.

But, blessed be God, there is hope for us in this matter. What man cannot do for himself, God in His rich mercy does for him. And the gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us how. The law of Moses prescribed certain ceremonies which were to be performed by the priests when a man came to be cleansed from leprosy, or to be declared clean. And one of these was the sprinkling of the leper with water and blood. The water and blood of Old Testament rites were most significant types of the sanctifying Spirit and atoning blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And these, and these alone, are the grand means by which we are healed of our leprosy.

Sin is a disease, we have said, as well as a crime, a most malignant and deadly spiritual disease; and, though not curable by human power, it is, blessed be God, by Divine grace. The Holy Spirit is given to men for Christ's sake to new-create them, and to restore them to spiritual soundness. There has never been a moral leper so depraved or so diseased as to be incurable by His power. This is the wonderful provision which is made for us in the gospel of Jesus Christ,

[1] 2 Kings v. 7.

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provision for healing our maladies as well as for pardoning our sins. So that the sinner who is awakened to feel his sinfulness, and to see his corruption in the sight of God, may cry out with all earnestness, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

And would we understand how willing Christ is to bestow these great blessings of his salvation, pardon, and spiritual healing, on sinners, even the chief, we have only to read of his miracles of mercy performed on lepers of old. When entering into a village on one occasion, there met Him ten men that were lepers, and these stood afar off, as the law of Moses required; but standing within the hearing of those ears which were never deaf to the cry of misery, "they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And Jesus said unto them, Go show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed." Such merciful and mighty cleansings were of frequent occurrence in the life of Christ. And none of His miracles could more impressively declare that He was sent of God. "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean," said a leper to Christ, humbly kneeling before Him. His faith in Christ's power was strong, for that power had been often tested. His faith in Christ's willingness might have been equally strong, for Christ had proved Himself as willing as He was able. And now Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand, and touched him, and said, "I will; be thou clean." Others might turn away with loathing from the poor leper, but not Christ. He "touched him." And "immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed."[1]

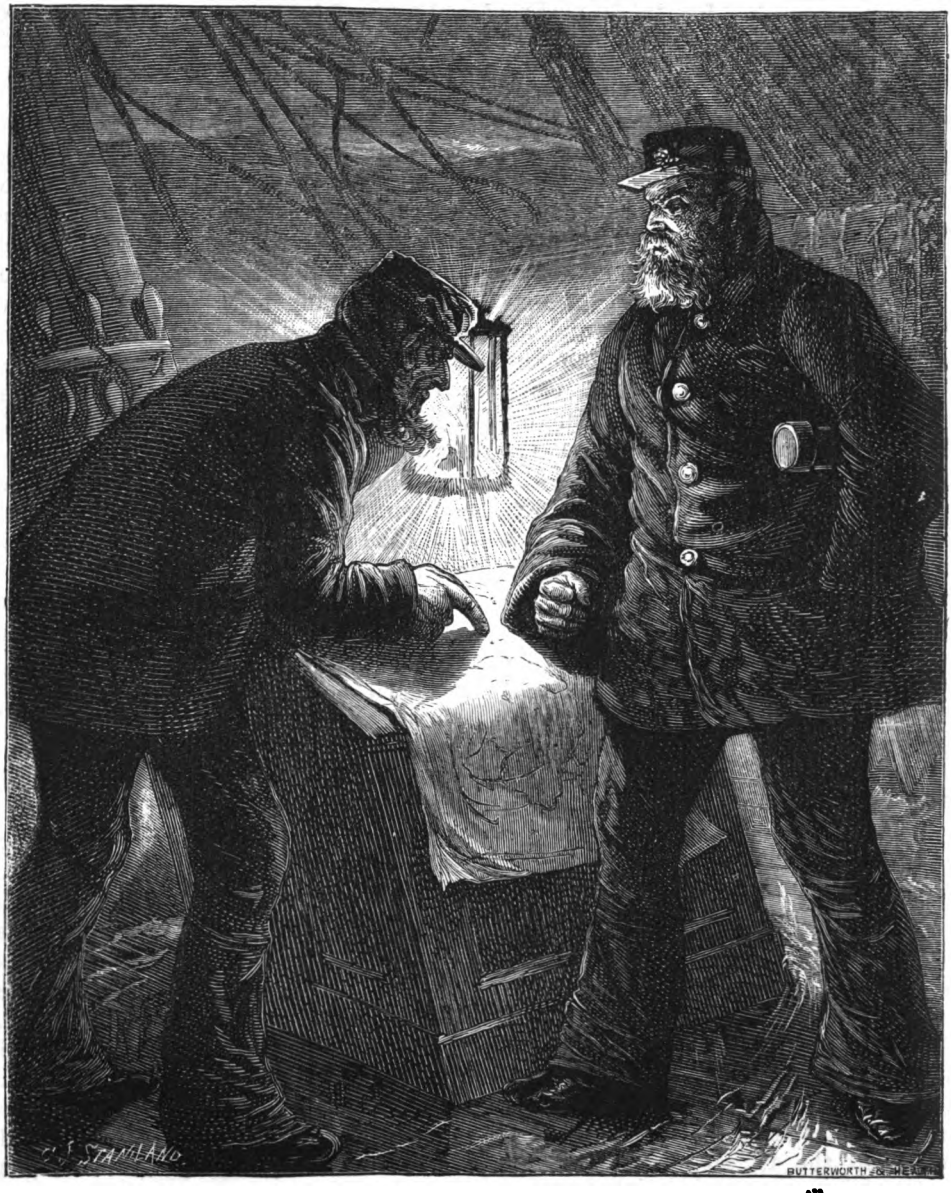
These things are written for our instruction. The Son of God, now at the Father's right hand, is as able and willing to heal the souls of men as He was to heal the body of that despised leper. Only let them come to Him with a simple-hearted faith in His power and love. And let them come with all the haste and earnestness with which, if stricken with fatal disease, they would have gone to Him, had they lived in Judea when He was on earth. "He is able to save unto the uttermost."

[1] Mark i. 40–42.

Be Thy love to me revealed:
Be Thy grace by me possessed:
Touch me, and I shall be healed;
Bless me, and I shall be blessed.

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He would not Believe.



"IN FIVE MINUTES WE SHALL HAVE CROSSED THIS TERRIBLE SPOT!"

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He would not Believe.

It is related that some years ago, while a frigate was cruising in the Mediterranean, her commander was ordered to ascertain whether there existed, within certain lines of latitude and longitude, a shoal or reef, which had been reported as being there. The captain addressed himself to the task with all the rough earnestness of a British seaman; at the same time entertaining a strong persuasion that nothing of the kind described would be found in the position pointed out. The undertaking was accordingly conducted in a superficial manner, and was speedily terminated by the captain declaring that the report which had occasioned the search was a perfect mistake, and originated in delusion or falsehood. But an officer on board—a man who had accustomed himself to accurate calculations and observation—was of another mind, and felt convinced that, with more careful and prolonged examination, a different result might probably be obtained. None of his arguments, however, availed with the commander, who sharply rebuked him as wanting experience, and being a mere theorist. The officer, however, carefully treasured up his observations and reckonings; and having left the frigate, persuaded the Admiralty to send him on a second expedition, with a small vessel under his own command, in quest of the reported rock, or whatever else it might prove to be. His voyage was successful; and he returned with the clearly ascertained information, that in a certain spot in the Mediterranean there lay a dangerous sunken rock. This fact, for safety in the navigation of that sea, was of course forthwith carefully marked down in the maps. For this service he was rewarded with promotion. The commander of the frigate hearing of this some time afterwards was highly incensed, and declared that the report was a fraud to get promotion; adding, "If ever I have the keel of this ship under me in those waters again, and do not carry her clean over where the chart marks a rock, call me a liar, and no seaman to boot."

Two years afterwards he was bound for Naples, having some public functionaries as passengers on board his vessel. One autumn afternoon, as the ship took a north-easterly direction, threatening dark strips of cloud began to stream over the sky, and a gale sprang up, which made the sails and cordage creak as though they would burst, while the heaving waves tossed and tried the timber of the well-compacted keel. Night came on, and the captain paced the decks rather anxiously, and consulted with the master of the ship, whose practical skill and experience rendered him a valuable counsellor. By the light of a lantern they examined a chart, when

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the master, pointing to the spot whereabouts they were, exclaimed, "Look here, sir!" There was the recently discovered point of danger, marked down under the name of the "Twills Rocks." The commander was reminded of former circumstances, and, incensed beyond description at the remembrance, burst out into a passionate speech, abusing the officer who had reported the discovery, and repeating his own determination to sail right over the spot, and so demonstrate that the whole thing was a bugbear; at the same time stamping his foot, to give emphasis to his words.

On the ship speeded her way over the rolling billows, and down went the commander into the cabin to join his illustrious passengers, and to tell the story of the sunken rock; thinking to make them merry at the expense of the false lieutenant. "In five minutes," said he, taking out his watch, with a laugh, "we shall have crossed this terrible spot!" But the intelligence by no means awakened sympathetic merriment in the company. They were terror-stricken, while he spoke gaily. There was a pause, and then a slight grating touch of something that scratched the bottom of the noble ship—then a noise of alarm from the hatchway—then a shock—then a crash, and a quivering of the hull; and then the bursting of timbers, and the in-gushing of water;—the frigate had struck, and was presently a wreck; the masts reeling over into the ocean, and the breakers threatening to swallow up all that remained of the ill-fated vessel.

With desperate energy everything possible was done to save the passengers. The boats were hauled out, and all on board embarked, and were ultimately preserved; except a few drunken sailors in the hold, and the commander, who would not survive his mad temerity. The last seen of the unhappy man was his white figure, bareheaded and in his shirt, looking out from the dark hull of the frigate, "the foam bursting round her bows and stern."

HE WOULD NOT BELIEVE. He had possessed the means of ascertaining the truth; he had listened to the arguments and heard the reports of others; there was evidence enough to satisfy an unprejudiced man, but he would not believe. And is not that captain's history a parable of what is commonly occurring among mankind? Persons will not hearken to those who are wiser than themselves; but, with some fixed idea of their own, which, though perfectly unfounded, nothing can move, they rush on to their own destruction. They are deluded by some falsehood they have created or adopted for themselves, while they pronounce the truth told them by others to be false and delusive. A man is warned against a certain course of conduct, which it is plain will ruin him; he is assured that a sunken rock lies before him, but he *will not believe;* and on he goes, till, in some dark hour, he makes shipwreck.

The parable well suits the case of men who disbelieve *what is reported on Divine authority* respecting another world, and their relation to it. The Bible is a chart laid down by God Himself for the guidance of men over the ocean of life. About its Divine origin, and its perfect truth, there can be no reasonable hesitation whatever. The evidences of

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Christianity appeal to the understanding and the heart with a force which nothing but determined obstinacy can resist, or sheer sophistry evade.

Miracles, prophecies, the character of Jesus Christ, the history of Christianity, the pure morality of the Bible, its original truths, their adaptation to our necessities—all these, and other considerations, offer an *accumulation* of proof unparalleled in connexion with anything else which asks belief; yet many *will not believe.* The Bible exhibits God's pure and righteous character, and the moral nature and accountability of man, his depravity, actual sinfulness, and aggravated guilt; the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ into this world for the redemption of sinners, His holy life and His sacrifice on the cross; the descent of the Spirit for the renewal of human hearts, and the edification, comfort, and peace of the spiritual Church; the necessity of faith in the Divine Mediator as the means of our acceptance with God, and of the new birth of the soul, and its growth in spiritual life and holiness as a preparation for heaven; yet many *will not believe.* It warns men that the rejection of these truths must lead to inevitable ruin. It shows that a life of sensuality, a life of avarice, a life of worldly ambition, a life of selfishness, a life of alienation from God, a life of impenitence and carelessness and frivolity, will assuredly conduct to destruction; yet many *will not believe.* It warns us that the wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness of man; that the Lord Jesus shall be revealed in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; that he who believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. It thus lays down the existence of *a rock*, on which men pursuing a certain course must dash: but many *will not believe.*

It must have been an awful moment when the commander of the frigate discovered his mistake; when the vessel actually struck on the sunken rock, and the wild waves came dashing over it; when he stood there on the shattered timbers, looking out in the dark night upon the watery grave opening at his feet. One can imagine, though hardly with sufficient vividness and power, what must have been his bitter self-mortification, reproach, despair, and agony, as he thought of the folly which had produced this irreparable mischief. In the few moments spent upon the wreck in that wild, raging sea there must have been intense anguish. A far more awful moment will it be when a self-deluded soul awakes in eternity to the consciousness of its own infatuated unbelief; when the truth, long-denied, opposed, ridiculed, and reviled, comes before the eye, and overwhelms the heart, as a stern reality. Can any one adequately imagine what must be the feeling upon the discovery, when the mischief is beyond repair, of a life spent in a reckless rejection of the Divine testimony respecting ETERNAL RUIN?

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THE FIRST GRAVE.



THE VISIT TO THE GRAVE.

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The First Grave.



Who has not stood, mournfully, by the side of a new-made grave? Reader, have not you been there? Then come and visit the first grave—as earth receives to her cold bosom death's first victim, so far as Scripture informs us. What a sight, seen for the first time! Flowers had withered; insects had perished; the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field, had devoured their prey; and the dread sentence—"Thou shalt die," had sunk into the heart of our first father. Yet, as time passed on, even out of Eden, guarded by the flaming sword of cherubim, the first transgressors had found mercy. One son was given them, and then another, to share their humiliation, toil, and sorrow, yet with the same promise of a Saviour to encourage them to prayer and faith.

As these two sons grew up they differed much in disposition. They differed, too, in their occupations. But there was a difference still wider; they differed in their *religion*. The religion of the elder was a religion which overlooked the fall; a religion without contrition, without grace, and without desires for grace; a religion which showed no faith in the promised Redeemer's atoning sacrifice. How common, even among many who call themselves Christians, is a religion which is essentially the same as that of Cain! On the contrary, the religion of Abel was the only religion which makes us feel that we are far from God, urges us to seek His pardon, and teaches how that pardon may be obtained. Abel's was the religion of one who confessed himself a fallen being, a sinner without excuse, a penitent, a believer of God's gracious promise, a dependant on grace, an expectant of salvation through the "Seed of the woman," whose death was foreshadowed by the sacrifice of the firstlings of his own flock.

Cain's religion did not make him happy. How could it, when it did not please God? How could such a religion, proud, heartless, unbelieving as it was, please God? Abel's religion brought peace to his soul. God accepted it, for the sake of Him to whom his faith looked forward. There are many living now upon the earth—you, reader, perhaps, are one—whose religion brings the same peace to their souls, through clearer faith in a Saviour who is more fully revealed.

Not only did Cain's religion not make him happy; it actually made him wretched, because he was angry with God for not accepting the unbelieving worship of his unhumbled heart. Nor was this all. He saw that his brother *was* happy. Yet, instead of "following the steps of the faith" which made his

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brother happy, he hated him, and slew him! "And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." His own *religious* works did not spring from a right motive; while his brother's were according to the will of God, showing his faith in the truth which God revealed, and his reliance on Divine grace.

It is the grave of this first departed worshipper of God by faith in Christ, the Messiah, that your thoughts are now invited to visit. It is a *believer's* grave; the grave, therefore, of one who is saved, and who has exchanged earth for heaven. What a dreadful form was that in which death, for the first time, seized on man!—violent—sudden—cruel—by an elder brother's hand—for no fault, but for being happy in the way in which the murderer himself might have been equally happy, had he sought it! Yet, shocking as these outward circumstances were, death is not really terrible to one who is "reconciled to God through the death of His Son." Sudden death is not an event from which a believer needs to shrink, coming on him in the path of duty, in a state of acceptance with God, spiritually prepared for heaven. Nor need he be afraid of cruelty: "God maketh the wrath of man to praise Him;" for He overruled the monstrous wickedness of Cain, to remove Abel, by a sudden surprise, to his eternal rest.

Cain was more miserable than ever after he had shed his brother's blood. Who can paint the horror of his conscience? But he had to account to God, as well as to his own conscience—as every unrepenting sinner will find at last. The farther we attempt to depart from God, from His truth, and from His worship, the deeper do we plunge in guilt, and the greater will be our misery.

Let us go to this holy martyr's grave; not to worship him, but to imitate him in worshipping God; not to ask him to intercede with God for us, but to learn the worth, to us, of that Saviour, who interceded for him, and took him to Himself. The Bible does not mention any burial, or any mourners. Cain may have buried him in the ground from whence "the voice" of his blood cried to God; or perhaps Adam found his remains unburied, and, with the sorrowing Eve, laid him in his lonely bed. What a scene! Now, the meaning of the threat given before the fall and of the sentence afterwards in paradise, begins to be felt. Though they have not yet tasted death themselves, they see, partly, what death is. Bitterly do they know, more than they knew before, what their sin has done, bringing

> "Death into the world, and all our woe!"

This grave was the first of innumerable millions. The grave is the only earthly inheritance of which we are sure.

Look at that first grave, and take warning. Yours, reader, will open for you. Are you pursuing pleasure, or wealth, or honour, or ease, or knowledge? Look before you. See that grave at the end of your path; it is—YOUR OWN. Will it be a believer's grave?—The grave of one who has rested his hopes of acceptance with God in life, in death, in the judgment, on Jesus Christ?

Look at the first grave, and be *stirred up*, first of all, by God's grace, to "make sure" of your acceptance with God

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through Jesus Christ; and then, to honour your God and Saviour in a course of watchful preparation for the end. Have you yet to *begin* a life of devotion to Christ? Are you, having begun, slothful in your business? Are you slumbering? "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest."

Look at the first grave, and *think of others.* While you read, some are dying. Shall your brothers and sisters be buried out of the sight of the living before they are warned, pitied, and led to Jesus? Shall the sorrowing be forgotten? the mother whose heart is now bleeding? the father whose soul is bowed down? the widow? It is good "to weep with them that weep." It is like our Saviour; it softens our hearts; it weans us from the world; it improves our piety.

Look at the first grave, and thank God that you are among the living; to repent if you have not repented; to flee to the Conqueror of the grave, if you have not fled to Him; to glorify Him by presenting your body "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

Look at the first grave, and let it remind you of the grave of Jesus. Mark with what care and loving reverence the body of our crucified Saviour was laid in the tomb. We learn from His own words that His spirit, which He commended to His Father on the cross, was then in paradise; thus teaching those who trust in Him, that when "absent from the body" they shall be "present with the Lord;" that "to depart" is "to be with Christ." By leaving His body in the tomb He submitted to the humiliation of burial as well as to the pains of death. When we go down to the dust, we follow our Lord.

Look on the first grave once more, and *hope.* Hope for Abel, that he shall rise from his long sleep. Hope for those believers who have been committed to the silent mansions. Hope for all the infants that have died; of whom Jesus has said, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." Hope *for yourself,* Christian reader. The Saviour has assured His true followers—"I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Words of truth; and words of comfort! He who "died for our sins, rose also for our justification." Let us think much of His resurrection. As we read in the verses which follow the account of His burial, how He showed His power, proved His Father's acceptance of His obedience "unto death," accomplished His predictions, and gave the surest pledge of the fulfilment of all His promises, by rising from the dead; let us rejoice in Him as our Redeemer, who "hath the keys of death and the grave," who is "the resurrection and the life."

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How to Hear.



AFTER THE SERMON.

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How to Hear.



THE sermon was ended, the blessing was pronounced, the doors were thrown open, and the people dispersed themselves in various directions towards their several homes.

"Well," said Miss Burton, as she walked along arm-in-arm with a friend, "what a sermon! I would not have been the Russels for a trifle. I wonder what they must have thought and felt while he was rebuking pride and vanity in such burning language. Whether any one has told him anything about them I don't know; but I am sure he must have had his eye upon them, his remarks were so suited to them. I have no patience with such pride—dressing in silk and satin, bedizened with watches and chains, while they can scarcely pay their way. It was but a few years ago that I recollect them, dirty, slovenly girls, whom everybody despised; and now they toss their heads, and strut about as if the earth was not good enough to walk upon. Oh, I detest pride beyond all things, and in such people, too! But it is just the way of the world; those are proudest who have least to be proud of. The parson, however, has read them a good lesson today, and I hope they will profit by it, and behave themselves in a manner more befitting their condition. For my part, I could think of nothing else during the sermon but the insufferable pride and vanity of those upstart girls, and I am not a little pleased that our minister spoke so plainly."

"A fine sermon that," said a farmer to himself as he stepped out of the door. "A wonderful man that parson of ours is, sure enough; how well he looks in the pulpit! He is none of your dronish mumblers, who preach a congregation to sleep. What a sight of books he must have read! And what grand words he uses too! I can't think where he learned them, or how he can remember them all. Well, for my part, I am no scholar, but I suppose all he says is true, for he must have read a world of books, and it is not for men such as myself to trouble our heads about such things. We have enough to do to work for our daily bread, and we can't do better than leave our parson, who has plenty of time, to think and study for us. Preaching is his business, as ploughing is mine; so every man to his trade."

"Ha! ha!" said young Jones, as he gaily skipped down the road, and twirled his cane in his hand, "a pretty Methodist sermon, truly! All very well for old women, and people who are too old to enjoy the world; but I am not going to mope myself to death with religion. I

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would not have wasted my time here to-day, but my aunt must be considered; it will never do to offend her. But she cannot live long: and when I come to my fortune I'll show them that I am made of very different stuff. A short life and a merry one, say I; and those who choose religion, why, I wish them joy of their choice.

"I wonder what people were sent into this world for, but to enjoy themselves and be happy. Pride, indeed! As if there was any harm in wearing a good coat and living respectably.

"I suppose the parson would have us shut ourselves up from the world; and be always praying and reading the Bible. He forgets that he was once young himself; and now that he can no longer enjoy the pleasures of the world himself, he would sourly keep them from those who are young. Good-bye to pleasure when people make so much fuss about religion. But yonder is Harry Wild; I must make haste and overtake him to arrange for the races to-morrow." With these words he quickened his pace down the avenue, and in a few moments every thought of the sermon had faded from his mind.

"Well," said farmer Holmes to himself, as he threaded his way among the people, "that is what I call a good sermon—very good; and I do believe our preacher is a very good sort of man; a little too strict, perhaps, but an honest and well-meaning man after all. But," said he, rubbing his head, "what to do as to purchasing that lot of sheep sadly puzzles me. It has been running in my head all church-time. If the drover would take half-a-crown a head less for them, I think it would be a good speculation; but, so dear as sheep are at present, I should never make my money of them if I were to give any more. Well, I must hurry home to dinner; and I'll ride over this afternoon, and see if he will take anything less, and if we can come to terms I'll secure them. I suppose our minister would call me to account for doing this sort of work on a Sunday, but one must live; and if I never do anything worse than make a bargain on Sunday I shall not have much to answer for." Absorbed in these calculations the farmer slowly wended his way, and the sermon was thought of no more.

"Not a bad sermon that," said Dr. Bowles to a friend, as they walked along together. "But do you not think our minister has too much sameness in his tone? His sermon was well prepared, the words judiciously chosen, the subject well divided, and the illustrations ingenious; but, after all, it was spoiled by his bad delivery. It is a pity but some one would give him a hint to take more pains in this particular; a few lessons in elocution would do him a world of service. I have nothing to say against our minister's doctrine; and as to his private life, every one knows he is a good man; but his manner of delivery certainly admits of great improvement." The doctor's companion fully coincided in these sentiments; and other topics of conversation arising, the sermon was quickly forgotten.

"Ah," said old James the shepherd thoughtfully to himself, as he walked

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with tottering steps through the churchyard, "that was a good sermon, and God grant that I may be the better for it. There is far too much of pride and vanity in all of us, in the poor as well as the rich, in the old as well as in the young. But whatever there may be in others, may the Lord help me to search out the depths of selfishness and pride in my own heart, to humble myself before God, and earnestly endeavour, by His blessing, to put away all that is evil and attain to all that is good. Here is a profitable subject for meditation, and I will bid all other thoughts depart awhile that I may give attention to it. I will watch through the week the state of my heart with increased carefulness; I will try to stop every feeling of pride and self-righteousness, and humbly endeavour that nothing in my thoughts or my conduct may be in opposition to God's holy will. May God forgive me that in time past I have fallen so far short of my duty, and dishonoured that gospel in which I believe, and grieved that God in whom I trust. Well for us, even the best of us, is it that we are not to be justified by our works, but that there is a Saviour who can cleanse us from our sins, through whom, by believing in Him, we may have forgiveness of the past, strength for the future, peace of conscience on earth, and a crown of glory in heaven. To His mercy and grace I commit myself, and by the aid of the Holy Spirit I will endeavour to think deeply of these things today, so that the sacred hours of this Sabbath may help me to discharge better my duties to God and man during the week, and fit me better for the great sabbath of eternity."

Happy old James! he listened not to the truth with an eye to other people, but to the improvement of his own heart. He heard not with "itching ears," with a disposition to criticise the manner and style of the speaker, but with the solemn feeling becoming one who has listened to the message of God. He heard not to go away with a jest and a sneer, but with a deep and abiding reverence for that truth which he felt was able to guide and support him in this world and prepare him for another, and which was worthy of the most serious and earnest attention he could bestow upon it. He heard not to forget and to plunge immediately into the calculations and cares of the world; but he retired from the hearing of God's will to think, and examine, and pray, so that he might add to the privilege and responsibility of the hearer the blessedness of the doer. Happy old James! no wonder that while many profited but little from the sermon, and very few so much as they might have done, he advanced from strength to strength, from grace to grace; the truth to which he gave such earnest attention cheered, guided, and blessed him; the light of God's countenance shone upon his path; and a well-grounded hope of glory, through the merits of Jesus Christ, filled his heart "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

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What will make a Death-bed easy?



PRINCESS CHARLOTTE AND THE MINISTER.

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What will make a Death-bed easy?



Allow me to ask your opinion, sir, as to what would make a death-bed easy," said the Princess Charlotte to a minister of the gospel who called upon her. The gentleman started at so unexpected a question from a young woman blooming with health and in so high a station, and he expressed surprise that the princess should consult him, when she had access to persons who were so much more capable of answering her inquiries. Her reply was that she had asked the same of many, for she wished to collect various opinions on that all-important subject. Thus pressed, the clergyman felt it to be his duty to be faithful. He therefore recommended her to study the Bible, which he said represented *faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the only means of making a death-bed easy.* The princess burst into tears, saying, "Oh! that is what my grandfather has often told me; but then he used to add, that I must not only read the Bible, but I must pray for the Holy Spirit to enable me to understand its meaning."

When the visitor rose to depart, the princess begged he would remember her in his prayers. The good man replied, that he did pray for her, not only from a sense of duty, but from inclination also; adding, that she might therefore rely on an interest in his poor prayers. "Do not call them poor," said her royal highness, "for you know that 'the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.'" The princess shortly after was unexpectedly called to the trial of an early death; and let us hope that she had taken heed to the pious counsel that was given her.

Reader! do you feel any anxiety about this matter? You too may soon be stretched upon a dying bed—a bed of pain and sorrow, from which no earthly power can save you; and nothing but faith in the Lord Jesus can make it easy. He is not only able but willing to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. If you have not come to Him, come *now.* The subjoined testimonies to His faithfulness are sufficient to prove that if you do so, He will never leave nor forsake you.

Dr. Payson, in his dying charge to the young men of his congregation, assembled round his bed, gave this testimony:—"I wish to tell you what a precious pilot Christ is, that you may be induced to choose Him for yours. I feel desirous that you should see that the religion I have preached can support me in death. I have many ties which bind me to earth, but the other world acts like a much stronger magnet, and draws my heart away from this. While my body is tortured, the soul is perfectly happy and peaceful, more happy than I can

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possibly express to you: my soul is filled with joy unspeakable. I seem to swim in a flood of glory which God pours down upon me; and *I know* that my happiness is but begun. I cannot doubt that it will last for ever! And now is all this a delusion? is it a delusion which can fill the soul to overflowing with joy in such circumstances?—No, it is not a delusion, I feel that it is not; I do not merely know that I shall enjoy all this, I enjoy it *now*. All this happiness I trace back to the religion I have preached, and to the time when that great change took place in my heart which I have often told you is necessary to salvation; and I now tell you again, that without this change you cannot, no, you cannot, see the kingdom of God."

Dr. Doddridge thus expressed the state of his mind during his last illness: —"My soul is vigorous and healthy, notwithstanding the hastening decay of this frail and tottering body. It is a blessed thing to live above the fear of death, and I praise God I fear it not. God hath, as it were, let heaven down upon me in my nights of weakness and waking. I am not suffered once to lose my hope. My confidence is, not that I have lived such or such a life, or served God in this or the other manner: I know of no prayer I ever offered, no service I ever performed, but there has been such a mixture of what was wrong in it, that instead of recommending me to the favour of God, I needed His pardon through Christ for the same. I have no hope in what I have been or done, yet I am full of confidence; and this is my confidence—there is a hope set before me: I have fled, I still flee, for refuge to that hope; in Christ I trust; in Him I have strong consolation, and shall assuredly be accepted in this Beloved of my soul. The Spirit of adoption is given me, enabling me to cry, 'Abba, Father.' I have no doubt of being a child of God, and that life and death, and all my present exercises, are directed in mercy by my adored heavenly Father."

The Rev. Joseph Alleine, author of the "Alarm to the Unconverted," gave like testimony to the truth of Christianity, and its power to make a death-bed happy, in an address to his friends who had collected round his bed in his last illness. "My friends," he said, "life is mine, death is mine; in that covenant which I preached to you is all my salvation and all my desire; although my body does not prosper, I hope, through grace, my soul doth. I have lived a sweet life by the promises, and I hope, through grace, can die by a promise. The promises of God, which are everlasting, will stand by us; nothing but God in them will serve us in a day of affliction. My dear friends, I feel the power of those doctrines I preached to you on my heart—the doctrines of faith, of repentance, of self-denial, of the covenant of grace, of contentment, and the rest. Oh, that you would live them over, now that I cannot preach to you!"

The following is the dying testimony of Mrs. Hannah More:—"*Jesus is all in all!* happy are they who are expecting to be together in a better world! The thought of that world lifts the mind above itself. To go to heaven!—think what that is. To go to my Saviour, who died that I might live! Oh, glorious

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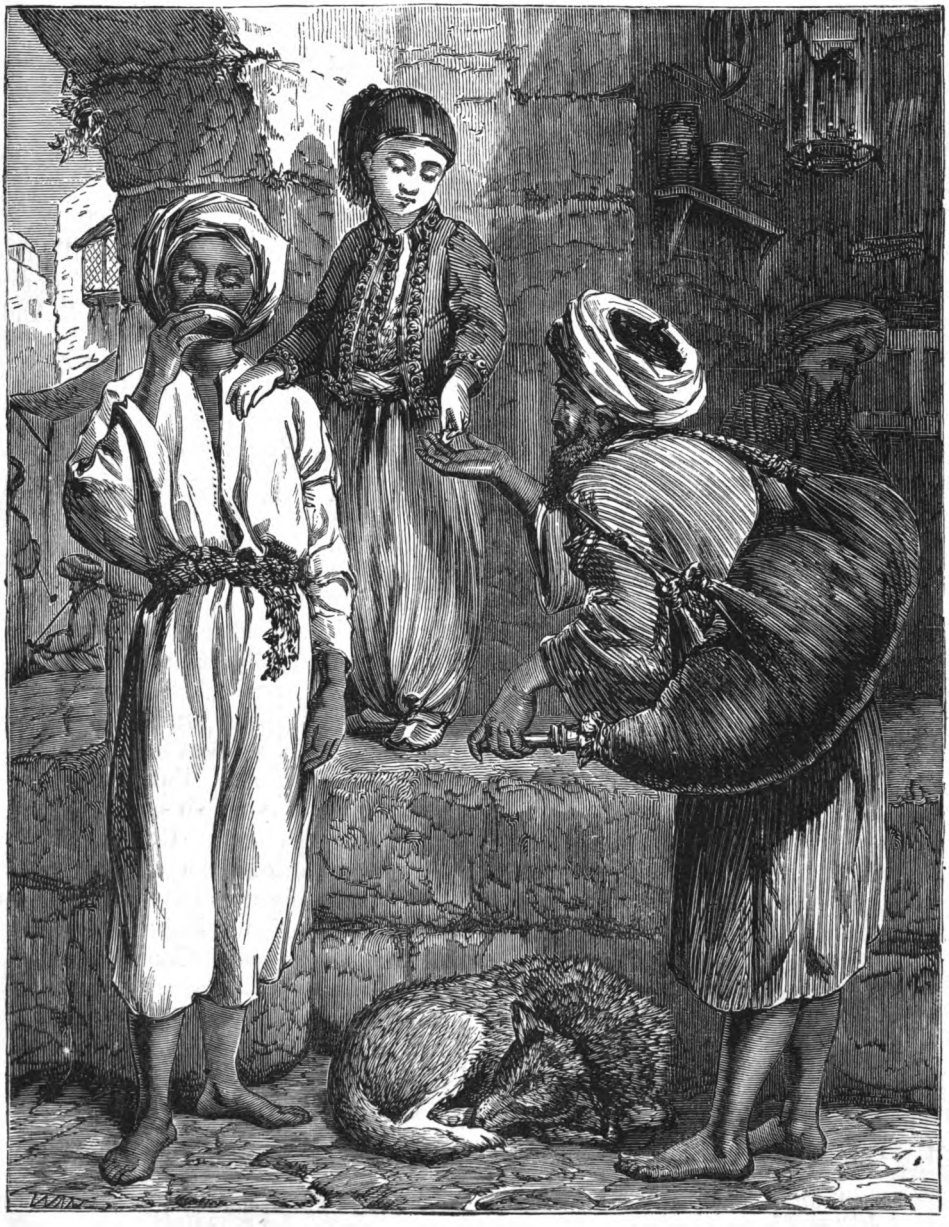
grave! It is a glorious thing to die." When some one spoke of her good deeds, she replied, "Talk not so vainly; I utterly cast them from me, and fall low at the foot of the cross."

The mother of the Rev. Basil Wood, when on her death-bed, took her son by the hand, exclaiming, "My dear, God has been very gracious this afternoon;"—he had left her for his public service;—"He sent my son from me, but He sent Himself to me. Oh! I am very happy; I am going to my mansion in the skies; I shall soon be there. Let me tell you by my own experience, when you come to lie upon your death-bed *an interest in Jesus will be found a precious possession.* Oh, what a mercy of mercies that we should be brought out of the bondage of Egypt, and united together in the kingdom of God's dear Son. I exhort you to preach the gospel; preach it faithfully and boldly; fear not the face of man; endeavour to put in a word of comfort to the unbeliever, to the poor weak souls."

Reader! have *you* faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? If you have not, hearken to the words of an old writer inviting you to come to Jesus:—"Have you sins, or have you none? If you have, whither should you go but to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world? Have you souls, or have you none? If you have, whither should you go but to the Saviour of souls? Is there a life to come, or is there not? If there is, whither should you go but to Him who only hath the words of eternal life? Is there a wrath to come or is there not? If there is, whither should you go but to Him who only can deliver from the wrath to come? And will He not receive you? If He yielded Himself into the hands of them that sought His life, will He hide Himself fro the hearts of them that seek His mercy? If He was willing to be taken by the hand of violence, is He not much more willing to be taken by the hand of faith? He that died for thy sins, will He cast thee off for thine infirmities? Oh! come, come, come; I charge you come; I beseech you come; come, and He will give you life; come, and He will give you rest; come, and He will receive you; knock, and He will open to you; look to Him, and He will save you. Did ever any one come to Him for a cure, and go away without it? Thou wouldest find something in thyself, but thou findest nothing but what thou hast reason to be ashamed of; but let not that hinder, but further thy coming. Come as thou art, come poor, come needy, come naked, come empty, come wretched, only come, only believe; His heart is free, His arms are open, it is His joy and His crown to receive thee. If thou art willing, He never was otherwise. He ever lives, ever loves, ever pities, ever pleads. He loves and saves to the uttermost all that come unto Him."

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"Come Ye to the Waters."



EASTERN WATER-SELLER.

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"Come Ye to the Waters."

In the Bible, spiritual truth is often taught by figures suggested by the country in which the writers dwelt. Thus, in the 55th chapter of Isaiah, waters, as well as wine and milk, are spoken of in order to point out spiritual blessings, or those good things which man, as a sinner, wants, and which God is able and willing to give. To these blessings every reader is now invited in the words. "*Come ye to the waters.*" Will you not accept them?

Come to the waters and *be satisfied.* "If any man thirst," said Jesus, "let him come unto Me, and drink."[1] For "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."[2] You have within you a sense of want. You are needy. You are craving something, though perhaps you scarcely know what it is you want; but you are restless and uneasy. Many, in your state of mind, have sought for satisfaction in worldly amusements—sinful indulgences; but they have always been disappointed. The tap-room, the gambling-table, the theatre, the ball-room, the fair, the horse-race, never have yielded, and never can yield, pure delight to the human heart. The heart wants God, and the blessings of His salvation. "Whosoever," saith the Saviour, "drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."[1] And this water He will give to you if you ask Him for it. He never denies it to the poor and the needy who call upon Him for it in sincerity and faith.

Come to the waters and *be cleansed.* Your mind and heart are unclean in the sight of God; and if you saw yourself as He sees you, you would cry out, "Unclean! unclean!" and would loathe your abominations. In such a condition you cannot have communion with God in this world, nor behold His glory in another. Only the pure in heart shall see God. And without holiness no man shall see the Lord. But that you may not perish in your sins, God bids you come, through Jesus Christ, that you may be cleansed from all your defilement. These waters have cleansed multitudes, who are now before the throne of God without spot. Come ye and be washed from your sins. Thus there will arise peace and joy in believing, and you will abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Come to the waters and *be refreshed.* Are you weary of the world—tired of its follies and pleasures? Are you weary,

[1] John vii. 37. [2] Rev. xxi. 6.

[1] John iv. 14.

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in passing through it, from trials, privations, and sufferings? Are you weary through a sense of sin and guilt? Have you found out that you have been living all your life in rebellion against God, and that you are therefore every moment liable to be cast into hell? Or if, by believing in Christ, you have already obtained forgiveness, and are now numbered with His children, yet, nevertheless, are weary because of the conflicts and temptations of life,—then come to the waters and be refreshed.

Do you need encouragement or help to accept this merciful invitation? Surely the invitation itself is a sufficient warrant to come—to come now, just as you are, with all your wants, and with large expectations. Still, through a sense of your unworthiness, or because of Satan's temptations, you may doubt your right to come, and may even think that if you do come you will be sent away unblessed.

If so, think of *the Being who invites* you. Isaiah speaks in the name of the Lord, and the invitation comes from God Himself. And can you hesitate when *He* calls? If a hungry man were invited to a feast, would he not go? If a poor man were invited by a rich one to share his wealth, would he not most readily accept the offer? If the Queen were to invite a number of her subjects to be entertained after a royal manner, would they not attend? Indeed they would. Why, then, do you not come to the waters at God's bidding? God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit invite you. The Church, those believers who have drunk of the waters, invites. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."[1]

Consider also *who are invited*, as well as who invites. God calls—but whom? Oh! this is a most important question. It is not the worthy, the good, the pure, the faithful, the righteous, who have never sinned against Him,—for there are none such; nor is it those whose hearts have been cleansed, and who are now His loving, obedient children. The poor, the wretched, the miserable, the wicked—in a word, the lost and the undone, the impenitent and the perishing, these are all invited. Read the Scriptures, and see that it is so: "Ho, *every one* that thirsteth,"—and as the thirst is inward, anxious and longing minds, without respect to character, are called—"come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money"—he that is so spiritually poor as to be unable to pay the smallest possible price for any one of God's gifts—"come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" that is, you are toiling for that which, if you obtain it, has no power to satisfy the soul. Therefore, says the Lord, "Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God,

[1] Rev. xxii. 17.

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for He will abundantly pardon."[1] Who, then, after reading all this, can say, I am not invited to the waters?

And for *the waters themselves*, be assured they are accessible, and ever at hand. One earnest prayer, one godly effort, through the teaching and help of the Holy Spirit, will take you to the wells of salvation, whence you may draw large supplies. These waters, too, are deep and plentiful. They never fail; like the rock in the wilderness, they follow the disciples of the Lord all their journey through. They are waters of mighty efficacy. They not only cleanse, refresh, and satisfy, but they heal, they quicken, they make fruitful, they secure growth, and they enliven.

Reader, will you not come to them? Perhaps YOU HAVE NO INCLINATION to come. If so, Christian faithfulness demands that your case should be plainly stated. Have you not yet come to the waters? What must we infer from this?

You have *no taste for spiritual blessings:* the appetite of your heart is depraved. And what a sad, fearful state is this to be in! It should make you tremble and fill you with shame. The blessings of salvation, which Christ died to procure, and lives in heaven to impart, are distasteful to you. You prefer the pleasures of sin to the joys of God. About an interest in Christ, the favour of God, and the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, you are unconcerned. The affairs of this life take up all your time and thought. In the world you are alive and active; but with regard to the everlasting welfare of the soul you are sleeping the sleep of death. But "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."[1] "What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God."[2]

You care not *to forego all the privileges, enjoyments, and honours* of true Christians, both in this world and the next; just as if real religion were a foolish dream, as if the unsearchable riches of Christ were lying vanities, and as if the descriptions of heaven and glory in the Bible were nothing more than idle tales. You are deceived—indeed you are. The god of this world has blinded your eyes, and hardened your heart, and he is leading you on to perdition. Consider your way. Turn to the Lord. Cast off the yoke of sin. Look to Jesus. Study His Word. Believe the gospel. Build on the foundation which God has laid in Zion. Can any earthly blessings be a substitute for the salvation of the Lord Jesus, and for the life and peace which He gives? "What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" To reach the living fountains of waters in the paradise of God, in another world, depends on your coming to the waters of salvation in this. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."[3]

[1] Isa. lv. 1-7.

[1] Eph. v. 14. [2] Jonah i. 6. [3] John iii. 36.

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"He Begged hard for Mercy."



"WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?"

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"He Begged hard for Mercy."

It is often said by those who have attended the death-bed of a neighbour, "He begged hard for mercy before he died." They think, and the departed person seemed to think, that God is a severe Judge, but that, by thus crying, His mind might be changed, and that He would thus be induced to become less severe.

Now this is an erroneous view, for God's mind does not want changing; it is WE, and only we ourselves, who want changing. We need not entreat of God that He will open some new and particular way of salvation for us; He has opened a way already; in that way we may even now be saved, but only in that way.

Let us refer to Scripture. "God so LOVED the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."[1] Now here we are told, that God so loved the world as to give Jesus Christ, His dear Son, who was God as well as man, to die for a guilty world. If God so loved the world, how does He, so to speak, need to be changed? But, observe, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish." God has given His promise to "whosoever believeth in Him;" and this word WHOSOEVER includes every one; it is as wide an expression as can be; here is a way of salvation pointed out even for the chief of sinners; for those who deserve to perish, who are perishing. God declares that if such a one believe in Jesus, he shall not perish. You should therefore at once believe in this promise.

Let us now notice how exactly the beautiful parable of the prodigal teaches the same truth. The father who is there described did not need to be changed. He was good, and his bowels yearned over his prodigal son: when the prodigal returned, he found his father the same that he had always been. This father represents that God who gave His Son to die for sinners, from love to them, that they might be saved. Now look at the prodigal. He departed from his father because his own heart was evil. But the Scripture tells us, that when he came to himself his thoughts were very different. He now remembered how good his father was; he felt that his only hope lay in his father's love to him; this made him feel, more than he had ever done before, the sinfulness of his past conduct. He now goes back to his father. His father has not altered; he rejoices to see his son changed in his mind and returning; and he delights to receive him, and to forgive him.[1] It was the prodigal who needed changing, not the father. It is you who need changing,

[1] John iii. 16.

[1] Luke xv.

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not God: if you are really changed in mind, God will receive you. He declares that He will in His Gospel: He invites you again and again to return unto Him.

He said to Israel, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself;"[1] the people of Israel had been the authors of all the evil under which they then suffered:—"but in Me is thine help." Israel must look to God, and to God alone, for help, as the poor prodigal could only look to his father; and God encouraged Israel thus to look to Him, and He is still saying to each of us, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved."

But in order to convince you that God is a God of love; that He has opened a way of salvation for sinners; that every sinner may be accepted in this way; but that if this be neglected, or mistaken, or rejected, there is no other way in which a sinner can escape, notice some other passages of Scripture.

Christ's ministers are ambassadors sent to speak of peace from their heavenly Father, the King of kings. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."[2] Here observe that ministers beseech you, to whom they deliver their message, to be reconciled to God. There is no bar to reconciliation on the side of God, but it is on your side; your ignorance of God and unbelief of His Word are opposed to Him, and ministers have to beseech you in the most solemn manner that this bar be removed. The hindrance is solely in your own heart; as we saw in the case of the prodigal, the only thing which kept him at a distance from home was his own wicked state of mind. Man by nature has a heart at enmity with God; his mind by nature has in it dislike to God, opposition to God's plans and purposes, and rebellion against His will. How dreadful! How certain to bring aggravated ruin! The apostle therefore says, "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Oh, consider this truth well, and pray earnestly to God to give you His Holy Spirit, that you may be born again, and so have a mind and disposition thankfully to receive salvation through Jesus Christ.

But the next verse shows us what God has done that there might be no bar on His side to reconciliation with the sinner. His holy and just law once stood between Himself and the sinner: it had pronounced death as the awful punishment of sin; and this just law could not be broken. In love to sinners, then, God gave His Son, as we read, "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."[1] God's dear Son took our sins upon His own guiltless head. He suffered the punishment which was due to us. And now, by His merits, a sinner can be forgiven and received by a holy God; a sinner unworthy in himself, but looked upon as worthy for Christ's sake. God now invites the sinner to return, bids him be reconciled, and receive the gifts of pardon, peace, and salvation, which in His mercy He has provided. "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

You have heard of Christ as a Saviour. No change is necessary in Him. He came "to seek and save that which was lost."

[1] Hos. xiii. 9. [2] 2 Cor. v. 20.

[1] 2 Cor. v. 21.

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You do not need to pray to Him in order to alter His mind. He has said, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."[1] It is you who need to come to Him. He is quite willing to receive you now, if you come to Him; and if you come to Him you will be saved by Him. Remember that He complained respecting the Jews, and gave it as the only reason why they were lost, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life."[2] They wanted the will, the heart, to come. May your heart be wrought upon by the Divine Spirit that you may come to Him! It is not enough merely to profess with the mouth, but we must believe with the heart. "He is able to save to the uttermost."[3] You have a heart by nature at enmity with God, unsubdued to His will; but Jesus can give you a new heart. He invited the woman of Samaria to seek from Him the Holy Spirit's influence, and He declared He would have given it, if she had asked. Ask it, then, of Him. He is as willing to change your heart now by that blessed influence as He was to change hers then. He stood also and cried publicly, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. . . . But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive."[4] Apply, then, to this gracious Saviour, for the Spirit's teaching and influence and power to be exerted on your heart; remembering that Jesus said, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"[1]

While you thus view God as merciful, and are earnest in prayer, do not depend on such cries as may be uttered in the moment of anguish, and which generally arise from the fear of punishment; but seek mercy in God's appointed way. This mercy has been displayed in appointing Christ Jesus as "the Way" in which a sinner may be received by Him. God's mercy has never opened any other way of saving men; nor will He save one sinner in any other way. Our Lord Jesus Christ died, the just for the unjust; and thus God is merciful, "forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin;" and at the same time just in all His ways and holy in all His works.

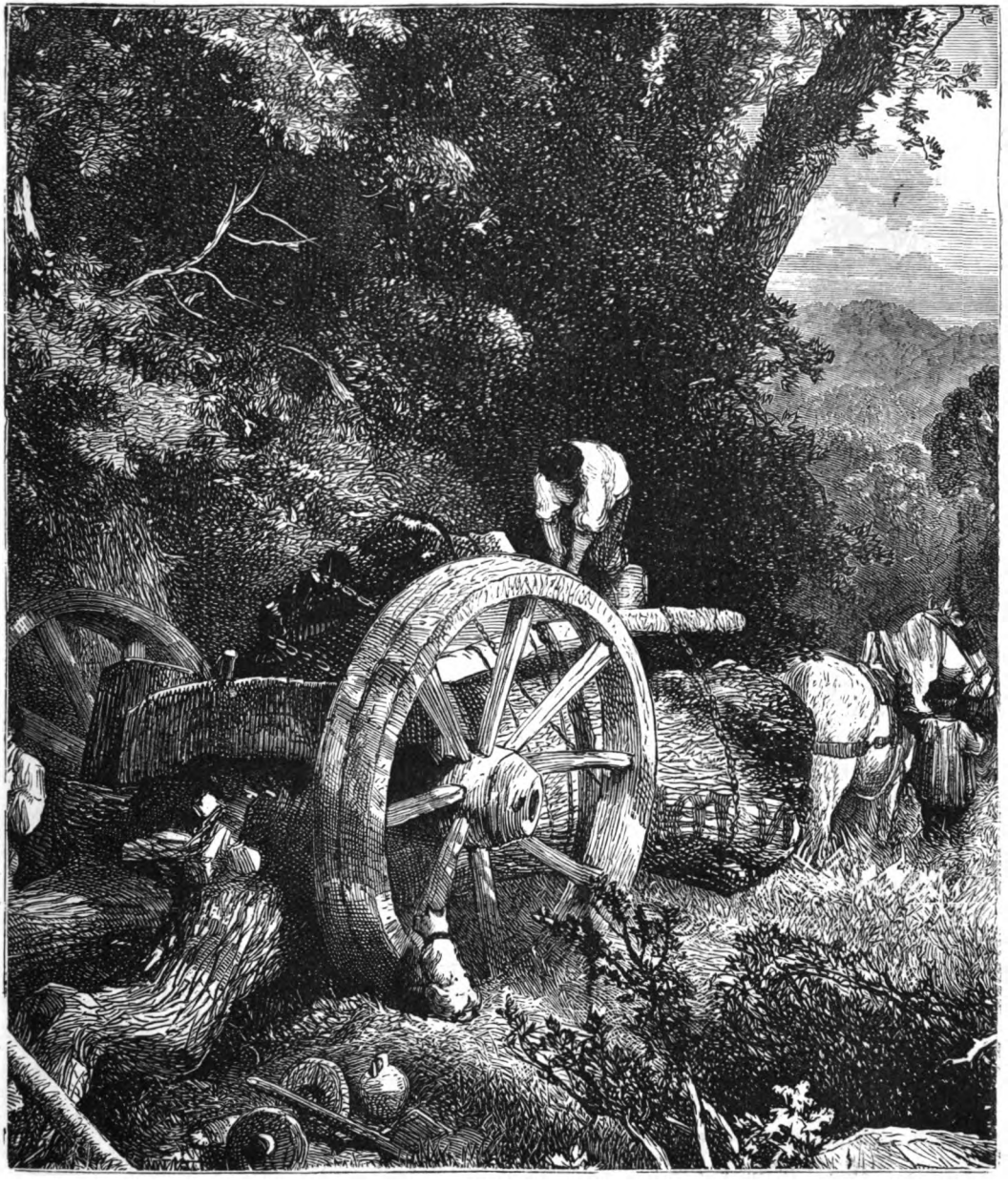
May the Lord give you, reader, to know the way of salvation provided even for you. May you be enabled to put your trust in the Saviour's death for sin. May you be taught to look to Him as the only way to the Father, and through Him seek earnestly the help that you need. May you receive from Him His Spirit, to change you and to humble you, and to bring you back with a broken and contrite heart to our heavenly Father; and may you be enabled to understand, to believe, to apply to yourself, and to rely on those gracious promises which the Saviour has made to sinners!

[1] John vi. 37. [2] John v. 40.
[3] Heb. vii. 25. [4] John vii. 37, 39.

[1] Luke xi. 13.

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"Cut it Down."



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"Cut it Down."

"Let it alone this year also!"—Thus spake the dresser of the vineyard in behalf of the barren fig-tree. Year after year the owner had sought fruit thereon, and found none. Despairing, at length, of rendering it fruitful, he orders it to be cut down,—"Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" But the Vine-dresser "answering, said unto Him, Lord, let it alone this year also . . . and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that Thou shalt cut it down."[1]

For you and me, dear friend, the Saviour spake the parable. We are the trees which His own hand has planted. From us He desires and seeks fruit. When, at the close of the last year, He came to you with this intent, how justly, "after so long a time," might He have said, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" But no, He would not; the greatness of His compassion pleaded in your behalf, and cried, "Let it alone this year also!"

It was a merciful reprieve. This it was that has kept you, day by day, in your lying down and rising up,—in your going out and coming in. Like others, you may have been sick, but not unto death. Others wasted, fell, expired. But death had no commission against you. Not until the last hour of the period which God appointed had passed away, could you "be hurt of" either the first or "the second death." Disease and death are obedient to Him who said, "Let it alone this year also!"

"And if it bear fruit, well."—The tree had been planted, not for its own sake, but for the expected fruit. For this the ground had been chosen, dug, enriched, enclosed; the tender shoot had been planted, watered, nourished, and pruned. For this, too, the tree is spared another year. He does not yet give it up. Another year it may yield abundance.

On the same condition, dear friend, your reprieve was granted. You were spared, that opportunity might be given you to repent, and "bring forth fruits meet for repentance." Year after year you have received the kind attention of Him who made you. So abundant, so incessant have the proofs of His care been, that He can now most justly ask, in respect to you, "What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?" Enough, and more than enough, He has done, to have warranted long since the expectation of your conversion and fruitfulness. With the knowledge of your guilt and danger, He has shown you the way of pardon and salvation through faith in His Son, and has given you His word, which is able to make you "wise unto salvation through

[1] Luke xiii. 6–9.

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faith which is in Christ Jesus." He has extended to you the privileges of the sanctuary, and, perhaps, the blessing of an able, pious, zealous, and faithful ministry; He may even have surrounded you with tender-hearted, benevolent, and praying friends; and His own "still small voice" has urged you to press into the kingdom of Christ. In thousands of cases fewer means have proved successful. Why, then, should not the Saviour have sought fruit from you a year ago?

But another year has been added to your term of probation; another opportunity given you, with perhaps increased advantages, to repent. And how have you improved it? It may be that, in some serious moment, you promised God that, if He would spare you—"this year also"—you would become His obedient servant. Have you remembered your promise? Have you fulfilled it? Has the fruit appeared? "If it bear fruit, well." Then, blessed art thou, "for thou hast found favour with God."

"And if not."—If you have not improved the past year, have not repented and turned to God—But, can it be? can you again have slighted the calls of Divine mercy, trifled with the offers of grace, and turned away from all the admonitions and entreaties of your God? Has all His love, so rich, so free, so long-continued, failed to melt your heart? That promise—have you forgotten it? A twelvemonth since, it may be, the Master came and sought the promised fruit; but, finding none, He said, "I will 'let it alone this year also!'" Ought you not to have repented within the year? But it has gone, and you are yet in your sins, perhaps on the brink of the grave, without even a hope of heaven! There is less prospect than ever of your being reclaimed. Thousands, during that period,—some of them, perhaps, your own friends and kindred,—have, with no better advantages than you have enjoyed, sought and found the Lord. Why has it not been so with you? "Wherefore," saith the Lord, "when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Oh that you had been wise, had understood this, had considered your latter end! Then it would now have been well with you;—"if it bear fruit, well. And if not, then—

"After that Thou shalt cut it."—If, at the year's end, no fruit should be found upon the tree, the Keeper of the vineyard would give it up. And why not? Why should it any longer cumber the ground? The trial will then have been made—an ample trial. Nothing more can be done for it.

The year expires, and still there is no fruit. For the fourth time the owner comes, seeking fruit and finds none. Who now will plead, "Let it alone this year also?" Not the Vine-dresser—He gives it up: He pleads no longer. And if not He, who then? None. It must perish. "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"

Has not all this, dear friend, a fearful application to yourself? Your reprieve may be just about to expire. Again the Master comes seeking fruit, and finds none. You are yet in your sins. Labour has been bestowed on you without avail. Why should the reprieve be renewed? Why should He spare you any longer? Already He has done for you vastly more than you deserve—more than for multitudes who have perished in their sins.

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What, then, can *you* expect more? Who can say that more will be of any avail? that it would effect anything else than an aggravation of your guilt, an increase of your condemnation? Why should He not also say of you, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"

If that reprieve be not renewed, then the time draws nigh that you must die. Short as your life has been, you must die. Little as you have accomplished of your projects and purposes, you must die. Much as you may wish to live for the sake of yourself or others, yet there is much cause for you to believe that, "thus saith the Lord, This year thou shalt die!" Alas! how much have you been deceived in your expectations of earthly pleasure! How much reason have you to repent of your idleness, folly, waste, thoughtlessness, disregard of duty—nay, of your whole life! And how much have you to *do!* If this must be your last year, month, or day, how precious to you is every moment! You cannot afford to lose a moment in idleness, or in mere worldly pursuits. Others may deem it needful to lay up for future years. Not so with you. If God has said of you, "This year thou shalt die"—then the next year you will want neither house nor shop, equipage nor furniture, dress nor food. The grave will be your house, the dust your bed, the coffin your furniture, the shroud your dress, the worms your covering. Long enough have you laboured for this world. Be persuaded now to labour for another. Discard all trifles. Be in earnest. Seek now the Lord. Resolve to make a desperate effort "to enter in at the strait gate." Set out for heaven. Begin this day. Press on, and on, let who will cry, "Stop!" Like Bunyan's pilgrim, stop your ears, and run, crying, "*Life!* LIFE! ETERNAL LIFE!"

It is not yet too late. If you delay no longer; if you give over trifling; if you forsake your sins, calling on God; if you turn to the Lord with all your heart, casting yourself on His mercy through Jesus Christ; if you do this, it is not yet too late. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" Then hear His voice. This day He renews the call. "To-day, if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart." This day—resolve to turn to God. Let not this sun go down, and leave you "dead in trespasses and sins." Let this very day be the date of your new birth. Let there be "joy in heaven" to-day on your account, while the shout ascends, "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

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REST AT HOME.



FATHER'S WELCOME HOME.

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Rest at Home.

A MINISTER, in America, being expected at a distant village, an old negro, named Jeddy, arrived in the afternoon to conduct him to the place, which was nineteen miles off. The minister hesitated, as it was late in the day, but Jeddy said, "Do go, massa, for no massa preacher been there for four months." He yielded, and started with Jeddy, whom he took on his horse behind him. The old negro was astonished at his kindness, and, as they rode together, gave a history of his Christian experience, while tears flowed from his eyes.

The road was bad, night was coming on, and the minister expressed a wish to return, rather than risk the perils of the way. "No, massa," said Jeddy, "don't lose heart; there be rest at home for you." "Yes," exclaimed the minister; "thank God, there is a home for us, Jeddy, where the weary are at rest." "Oh yes, massa," said the poor labour-worn slave, "me often tink of dat; me hope to get dere some day."

"There is rest at home. The sentence," writes the minister, "gave me new energy, and has often done so since in many a harder trial. 'How old are you, Jeddy?' I inquired. 'Seventy-three, massa: me be getting toward dat home, massa.' 'Have you a wife, Jeddy?' 'Yes, massa; but me don't know where she be. Old massa not love God, and sold her far away.' 'Have you children?' 'Yes, massa.' 'And where are they?' 'All gone too, massa; me don't know where; but we all loved God, massa, and hope to meet in dat home where be rest.' What, thought I, are my sufferings, compared with those of this poor sorrow-stricken servant of my Master? 'There is rest at home,' said I, involuntarily, and motioned to proceed."

It was very dark; but through rain and mud and ruts they plodded on, the minister still nerved by the thought that there was "rest at home." At length was seen the glimmer of a distant light. "Dat is home, massa," exclaimed Jeddy, with delight. There, in the midst of kindness and comforts, they soon forgot their weariness; but, sleeping or waking, the minister's thoughts were filled with the delightful truth, that there is "rest at home."

Home, it is said, is home, however homely. It is so in this passing world, and is felt to be such by the right-minded part of mankind. Not to have a home is extreme misery; and not to love home, shows a hardened mind. The Christian, the poorest Christian, loves his home; but it is the Christian's happiness, like poor Jeddy, to expect a better home than the best on earth. The kingdom of heaven is his home, and there is rest; while all the excellences which endear a

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beloved earthly home adorn with brighter glory the Christian's eternal home.

Home is a refuge from the toils and cares and strife of a vexing world. The labourer who has toiled for many hours beneath a burning sun longs for home, "As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work."[1] The man of business, wearied by the world's cares and anxieties, retires from the scene to find rest at home; and there, amidst the smiles of a beloved family, forgets for a few hours his vexations. Sweeter still is the hope of home to the worn-out traveller, or to the mariner long tossed on stormy waves; but more sweet and soothing to the righteous is the prospect of their heavenly abode, with the delightful confidence that there "is rest at home;" for "there remaineth a rest to the people of God."[2]

Cares and anxieties, sooner or later, enter every earthly home, but will never break the peaceful calm of heavenly rest. There is rest from affliction in its thousand forms: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them; . . . and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."[3] No lifeless bodies, no opened graves, no funeral processions, no mourning friends, will be ever seen there.

There, too, will be rest from the strife of the Christian warfare. Every true Christian has to struggle against foes within and without. Within, an evil heart and manifold corruptions, which caused an apostle to exclaim, "O wretched man that I am!" Without, wicked spirits and the world's ensnaring power. But in the believer's heavenly home no such conflicts will be endured. No corruption will grieve within; no tempter war without. No doubts, no fears, will disturb the calm that never will be broken. They will have ceased to trouble, and never will trouble again. There indeed is rest at home; for into that home sin can never enter, and sorrow can never intrude. Reader, will it be yours? Those who have a title to it are delivered by God from the "power of darkness," and are "translated into the kingdom of His dear Son;" they "have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins," and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, and thus are made "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."[1]

Home is the place where dwell the friends who are most dear to our hearts. Christian benevolence would bless the world; Christian friendship regards with strong affection many that never dwelt under the same roof or sat at the same table with us; but what, after all, are these more distant friends to the father and mother who cheered our home in childhood? or to the husband or wife, or sister or daughter, who cheers it in our riper years? In their society and affections there is rest at home; but dear as are such beloved friends, the believer has dearer and better friends "in the realms beyond the grave." A servant of God contemplating his eternal abode, said, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire

[1] Job vii. 2. [2] Heb. iv. 9. [3] Rev. xxi. 3, 4.

[1] Col. i. 12, 14.

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beside Thee."[1] All who are travellers to the heavenly home partake of similar feelings. They love the Lord God; love God, because He first loved them, prefer Him to all besides, and find in His favour peace and joy. "Thou art my God, and I will praise Thee: Thou art my God, I will exalt Thee."[2] "This God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death."[3] The blessed Jesus, "God manifest in the flesh," is to the righteous the object of supreme affection, and is loved more than father or mother, or son or daughter, or life itself. Friends, home, liberty, and life, are dear; but Christ is more dear, and all who are His "count all things loss" that they may win Christ. He promises each of them, "Where I am, there shall also my servant be."[4] They will enter the joy of their Lord; see the King in His beauty, whom they loved below, and find His home theirs; and surely with such a Friend, and in such a home, there will be rest.

Home is the place were dwell those to whom we are most dear: a loving parent or an affectionate child, a tender husband or a devoted wife. In such a home, with friends so dear, there must be rest. But all the love of the best earthly friends sinks into nothingness when compared with the love of God. Behold His love! He "gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."[1] See the Son offering the great sacrifice for sin: "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God;" "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree."[2] "With His stripes we are healed."[3] Not only did love cause Him to suffer as the atoning Saviour, but He became the gracious Shepherd of the saved, and says, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish."[4] Then behold the Holy Spirit's work, enlightening every mind that is enlightened, changing every heart that is changed, and renewing all that become the heirs of salvation. How excellent must be that rest for whose bestowment on ruined man the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the infinite and adorable God, employed such means; and how boundless must be the love that called them forth!

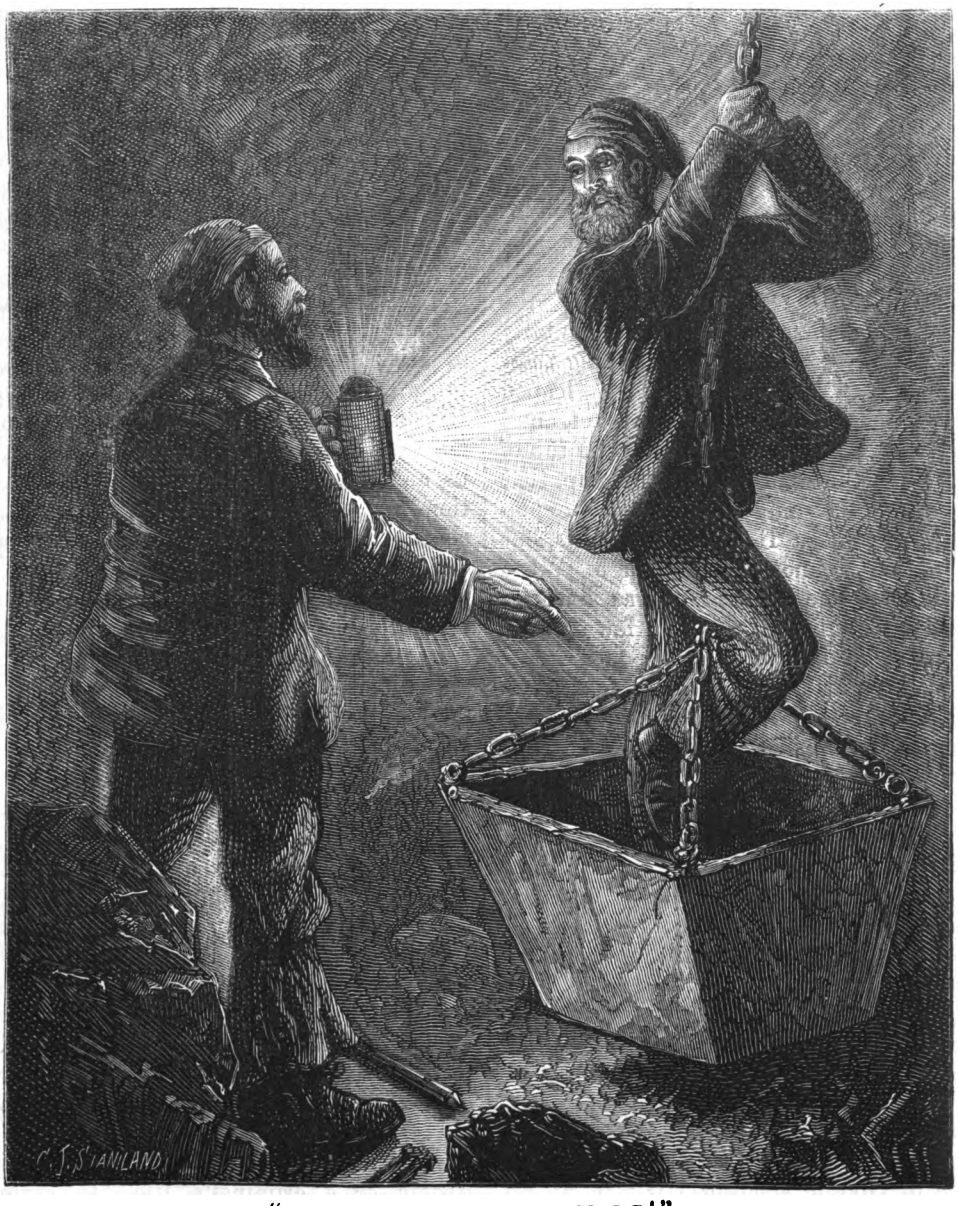
Blessed are they who, unlike the men of the world, that have their portion in this life, enjoy the sweet hope of rest at home, and that home the eternal world. This cheers in life and death. Let it cheer the troubled Christian. An everlasting home will soon recompense all the trials of the way. One year there would be an ample compensation for numerous years of trial and toil on earth; and what then must be the ceaseless bliss of eternity? In the prospect of it long years of heavy suffering will appear "light affliction, which is but for a moment;" yet which "worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."[5]

[1] Psa. lxxiii. 25. [2] Psa. cxviii. 28.
[3] Psa. xlviii. 14. [4] John xii. 26.

[1] John iii. 16; Rom. v. 8. [2] 1 Pet. iii. 18; ii. 24.
[3] Isa. liii. 5. [4] John x. 28. [5] 2 Cor. iv. 17.

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THE LOVE OF GOD



"YOU SHALL LIVE, AND I WILL DIE!"

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The Love of God.

Two men working together in a mine were preparing to blast the rock, and had placed the fuse, which accidentally took fire. Seeing their danger, they leaped into the bucket, and called to the man at the top of the shaft to draw them up, that they might escape the explosion. He tried to do this, but was not strong enough. What could be done? The fire was burning towards the powder, and in a few seconds it would go off. One of the men was a pious man, and, at this awful moment, said to the other, "You shall live, and I will die, for you are an impenitent sinner, and if you die now, your soul will be lost; but if I die, I know that by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ I shall be taken to Himself." He leaped from the bucket, leaving his astonished companion to be drawn up in safety: providentially he Himself was preserved uninjured amidst the fragments of the broken rock.

Here was love. When one must die, the Christian would lose his own life, that his unconverted fellow-labourer might have a little longer space for seeking mercy. Yet this noble and disinterested love was feeble in comparison with the love of God in sending His Son to be the Saviour of the world. God bestows ten thousand thousand blessings on our fallen race. The spring, the summer, the harvests, the fruits, the sunshine of day, the calm repose of night, the health and vigour that millions enjoy, are all gifts of His; but all are surpassed by the brighter display of His love in the gift of His only begotten Son. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." The apostle Paul speaks thus of it: "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

The gracious Sufferer is benevolent and excellent, and they for whom He dies are utterly unlovely, and worthy only of abhorrence and death. When we were enemies, Christ died for us.

Wonderful indeed is this fact, that Christ, the Lord from heaven, having taken to Himself human nature, died in the sinner's place. Through the Eternal Father's love, the blessed Jesus died as *a substitute* for guilty men. This is the obvious meaning of the assertions, "Christ died for us," "died for our sins," "died for all," "gave Himself for the life of the world," "gave Himself a ransom for all." A ransom was a price paid for a captive's liberty or a criminal's life. In some cases this was allowed by the Jewish law,

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and a person liable to death might save his life by paying a ransom for it.[1] The meaning of the term is significantly expressed by the law that no satisfaction, no ransom, should be received for the life of a wilful murderer, but that he should surely die.[2] When Christ is declared to have given His life as a ransom for His people, nothing less can be intended than that He suffered in their stead, and on account of their sins. By doing this He obtained eternal redemption for them, His humiliation and sufferings being the ransom price of their pardon and salvation; and hence it is said. "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price."[3]

In this wonderful plan of mercy the love of God is commended, for it was altogether the fruit of love. Man had no claim on God for help and salvation. God would have been just and holy if the whole world had perished. The Son of God would have been blessed and excellent in His own perfections if He had never come into our world to be the Saviour. But love moved the Eternal Father to pity ruined men, and "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."[4] Love prompted the Son to become a willing victim, for "Christ hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God." The vastness of this love can never be fully comprehended.[5]

The love of God is commended by the *Saviour's glory and Divine perfections.* Christ Jesus, the Eternal Word, "was with God, and was God."[1] How boundless was the love, that for ruined man gave one so glorious to such meanness; so exalted, to such debasement; so happy, to such misery; so dear, to such bitter woe; so superior to the world, as the Lord of glory, to be crucified as a malefactor; the holy to die for the unholy; the only righteous for the wicked; the king for the criminal; "the Lord. from heaven," for a sinful worm!

The love of God, in the gift of Christ, is further commended by the *utter unworthiness of all for whom He died.* As sinners, men are unworthy of the Divine favour; and, as estranged from God, are deserving of His entire abhorrence; yet (oh strange!) for the vilest of the vile He died. Had mortal men been as innocent as they were guilty, the coming of the Son of God into the world for their benefit would have been wonderful. Had they been suffering from misfortune, not from sin; or had they been a world of contrite sinners crying for mercy, the gift of Christ for their salvation would have been an amazing gift. But God saw them rebels, enemies, enmity itself to Him, and He knew that the greater part would continue in their rebellion in spite of all His boundless compassion and of the Saviour's dying love; and yet "God so loved the world," that for it Jesus died, and sinners are not left to perish, but through their own choice.

The love of God is commended by the *greatness of the salvation* wrought out by the suffering Son of God. What can fully represent its nature or its worth? Think of the most dismal prison, and of the most wretched prisoners there; but

[1] Exod. xxi. 30 [2] Numb. xxxv. 31.
[3] 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. [4] John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 9, 10.
[5] Eph. v. 2; Eph. iii. 19.

[1] John i. 1.

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sinners are going to a worse prison, that "prepared for the devil and his angels."[1] Think of the worst condemnation imaginable; of a wretch doomed to die by slow and lingering torments that would endure for months. The condemnation under which the sinner now lies, and whose execution awaits him, is worse than this. He is doomed to be always suffering, but ever hopeless; always tortured by the worm that never dieth, and the fire that never shall be quenched.[2] Think what it must be to be in such a state, under Satan's power, tormented with him in outer darkness, in eternal night, amidst weeping and wailing and utter despair. To all this every unpardoned sinner is hourly exposed, for were he to die he would fall into it; and from all this, God, through the sufferings of His Son, delivers every helpless human being who flees to Christ; and each may exclaim, "Great is Thy mercy toward me: and Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell."

See the love of God also commended by the *vast and boundless good* to which, in this mysterious way, He would raise the lost and perishing. That good commences upon earth. The undone sinner, when led to Christ, is "justified," has "peace with God," possesses all good in His favour, becomes His child, and partakes of His tender love. In Christ, having become a humble believer, he has a Saviour all-compassionate and almighty, a Shepherd that safely guards all His flock, an Advocate that ever lives to intercede for him; and in the Holy Spirit he has a helper, a strengthener, a teacher, and comforter. All the promises belong to him. Poor in himself, he is rich in Christ. Mansions await him in his Father's house, and he will rest waiting the fulfilment of all his Saviour's promises at the resurrection and the judgment-day. When that day comes, his happiness will be perfected.

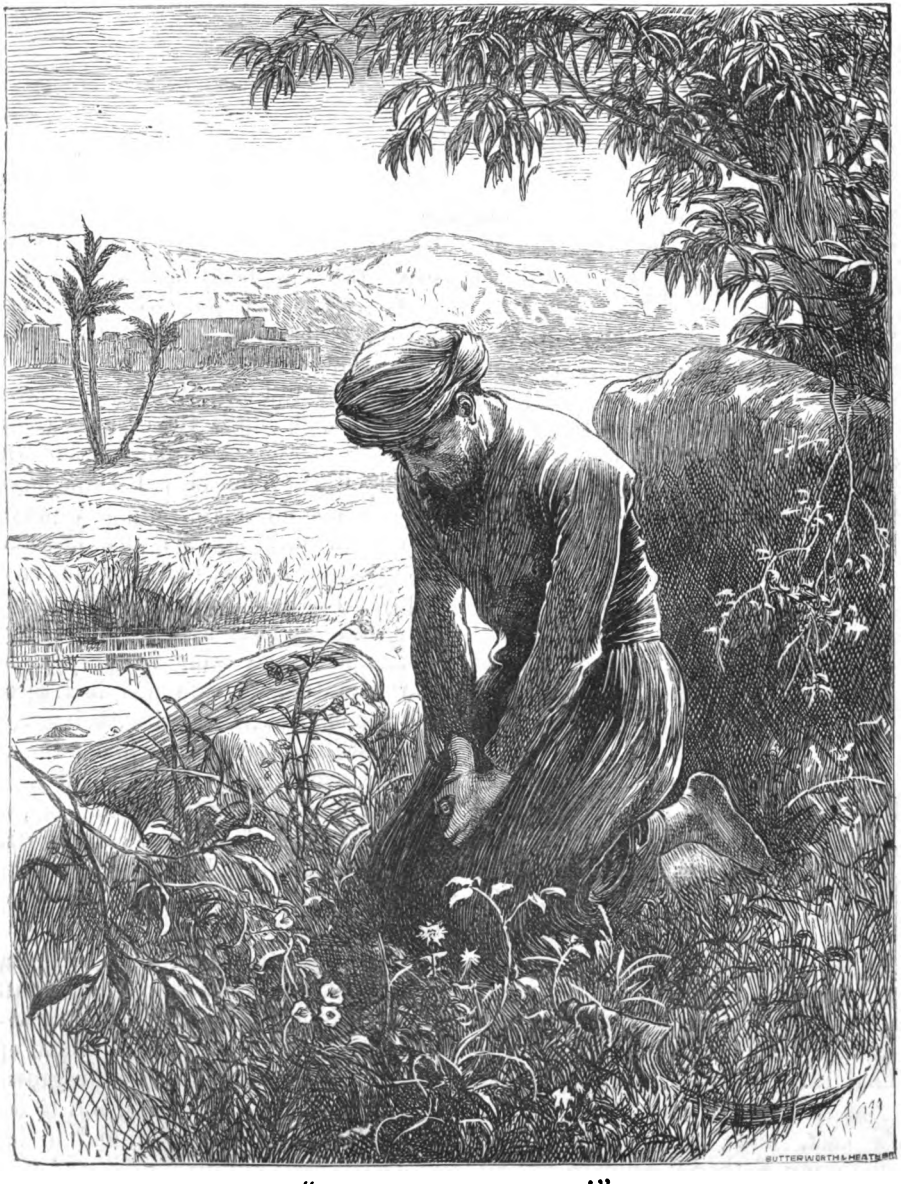
And all this holiness and happiness *will continue through eternity.* A criminal condemned to death was reprieved. The kind friend who conveyed the message of mercy, fearful of too much excitement, merely told him that it would be better for him to live for another week. "A week!" said the poor convict, "a week! that is a long time!"—and fainted away through excess of joy. And if such was his joy when supposing that but one week was added to a forfeited life, what should be our feelings of rapture and thankfulness for salvation from eternal death, and the sweet hope of eternal life, through the sufferings of God's beloved Son? Blessed God, how cold is our gratitude! how feeble our loftiest praise!

The views thus taken every reader should bring home to himself. *I* am one for whom Jesus suffered. God commended His love towards *me*, in that, while *I* was a sinner, Christ died for *me*—died to save *me* from those depths of woe, and to raise *me* to those heights of endless life. Shall He not have my heart? Blessed Jesus, take it now. Shall not my soul be committed to Him? O Lamb of God, receive it into Thy care and keeping now!

[1] Matt. xxv. 41. [2] Mark ix. 43.

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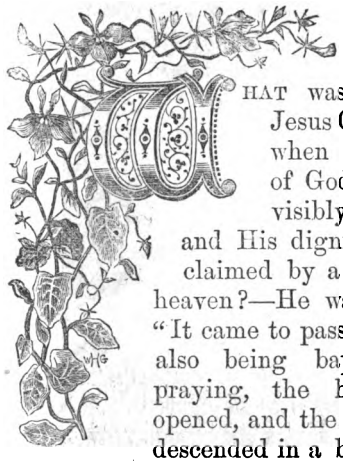
He was Praying.



"LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!"

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He was Praying.



What was our Lord Jesus Christ doing when the Spirit of God descended visibly upon Him, and His dignity was proclaimed by a voice from heaven?—He was praying. "It came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased."[1]

What was Jesus Christ doing when He was transfigured in the presence of His disciples and of visitors from heaven?—He was praying. "As He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistering. And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem."[2]

What was Jesus Christ doing when, in the garden of Gethsemane, an angel was sent to cheer Him in the prospect of His final sufferings?—He was praying. "He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him."[1]

What was the prophet Daniel doing when the angel Gabriel was sent to assure him that within a given period the Messiah should come to make atonement for sin, and fulfil the other gracious purposes for the accomplishment of which He had been promised?—He was praying. "Whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal

[1] Luke iii. 21, 22. [2] Luke ix. 29–31.

[1] Luke xxii. 41–43.

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up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy."[1]

What was the whole congregation of Israel doing when Gabriel was sent again to announce to Zacharias that he should have a son, who should be the herald to proclaim the promised Redeemer's advent?—It was praying. "The whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."[2]

What was Saul of Tarsus doing when, having seen the Lord Jesus in the way to Damascus, and humbled himself before the Saviour, Ananias was sent to restore his sight and guide his steps?—He was praying. The Lord said to Ananias, "Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight."[3]

When messengers came to Peter from Cæsarea, to invite him to a new sphere of usefulness, that so he might be the honoured instrument of opening the door of faith to the Gentiles, what was the apostle doing?—He was praying. "I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision. And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Cæsarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting."[1]

When Peter, after his deliverance by an angel from prison, came to the house of Mary the mother of John, and informed the company assembled there of the miracle that had been wrought on his behalf, what were they doing?—They were praying. Peter was kept in prison; "but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."[2] Anxious for one so beloved, whose life was so important, but whose execution was appointed for the morrow; una to purchase his release, to influence the heart of the stern tyrant who had decreed his death, or by any human agency to avert the sentence; sorrowful and dejected, they met to pour out united supplications before the Almighty. "And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent His angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying."[3]

When the prison at Philippi was shaken, when the feet of the messengers

[1] Daniel ix. 20–24. [2] Luke i. 10–17. [3] Acts ix. 11, 12.

[1] Acts xi. 5, 12. [2] Acts xii. 5. [3] Acts xii. 11, 12.

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of salvation were suddenly released from the stocks, and the heart of the cruel jailer became docile, submissive, and obedient, what had Paul and Silas been doing?—They had been praying. This is the introduction to the pleasing portion of the narrative; this was the preparative for their deliverance, and for the conversion of the jailer and his house: "At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed."[1]

And what should *we* do, if we are in trouble?—what, if the sorrows or dangers of others occasion anxiety on their behalf?—what, if we desire to receive those rich spiritual blessings, those heavenly donations, which none but God can bestow?—what, if we long for usefulness in the church of God, or feel compassion for the myriads who are perishing in sin and ignorance? It is written, "Ask, and it shall be given you." May it not often be said, then, "Ye have not, because ye ask not?" In the cases just mentioned, and in many others recorded both in ancient and in modern history, how evidently was the promise fulfilled, "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."[2] True, we do not deserve that God should hearken to us; but He is gracious. True, we cannot plead any worthiness of our own; but we may plead the worthiness of Christ, the righteous One, the Saviour of all who commit themselves to His care and guidance. When Jesus prayed, the Father saw before Him His beloved Son, His faithful servant, the object of His highest complacency; and the suppliant was for His own sake heard and accepted. But in this He is alone. All others of the human family are unworthy of the blessings they request, and if they receive them, must be indebted to free mercy. Daniel, therefore, in urging his petition, disclaimed all personal merit, saying, "We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies."[1] But we are authorized to ask for blessings in the Saviour's name. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name," said He, "He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."[2] One of the relations He sustains to His people is this; He is their righteousness. Every true believer in Him is a partaker of this righteousness; and "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."[3] "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."[4]

[1] Acts xvi. 25, 26. [2] Matt. vii. 7; Isaiah lxv. 24.

[1] Dan. ix. 18. [2] John xvi. 23, 24.
[3] James v. 16. [4] Hebrews iv. 14–16.

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LONDON.



CHEAPSIDE.

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London.



LONDON is believed to be the largest city in the world, in population if not in size. Taking in the suburbs, it has at least three millions and a quarter of inhabitants. This is more than all England had five hundred years ago. And even now it is a great deal more than many whole countries. For instance, the population of the kingdom of Saxony is not two-thirds of the population of London; and that of both Wurtemberg and Baden is still smaller. Not one of the chief cities of Europe comes near to London in population. Paris has not so many inhabitants by nearly a million and a half; Petersburg and Vienna not one quarter so many. London has ten times as many inhabitants as Madrid, nearly five times as many as Berlin, ten times as many as Amsterdam, thirteen times as many as Rome, sixteen times as many as Copenhagen, and twenty-two times as many as Stockholm. These are the capitals of different countries in Europe.

But all London is not alike, as every one who lives there knows. Part of it is laid out chiefly in handsome squares and streets, where the nobility and principal gentry live. Part consists of busy thoroughfares with handsome shops on each side. In other parts you find streets, and lanes, and courts, with men of business bustling about all the middle of the day, but almost deserted in the evening and night; this is where the merchants' offices and warehouses are. In other parts, again, you come to street after street, inhabited by none but the labouring classes and the small shopkeepers who supply their wants. And in the poorest parts of London are many wretched courts and alleys, where a whole family (and often more than one) lives in one small room; and where a single house, crowded from top to bottom, has almost as many people as some whole villages in the country.

It has often been said that half the world does not know how the other half lives. This applies strongly to London. Half London does not know how the other half lives. There are many poor people living in the lanes and courts at one end of London, who have never once been in the squares and streets at the other, and probably never will be; and but few of the great people at the west end have ever set foot, or ever will, in the poorest parts of the great city. I am not blaming either the one class or the other, but only stating the fact. Generally speaking, the people at the two ends of London see as little of each other, and know almost as little of each other's way of life, as if they lived on opposite sides of the world, instead of at opposite ends of the same

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town. Their habits are quite different, they never meet, they are perfect strangers.

If you, reader, should live amongst these lanes, you know well enough that what I have said does not apply to all. How come the Scripture Reader and the City Missionary among you? How is it that every now and then a gentleman, or two or three gentlemen together, are seen in your lane, going up first one staircase and then another, and knocking at door after door, bent on some kind work? Perhaps even ladies are sometimes seen in your houses, who have come far from their own homes, to visit the poor who have no nearer visitors, and try to help them in body and in soul. How comes this? What does it show? That among the rich and great there are kind Christian hearts that care for the poor; and that there are some among the upper and middle classes, who, out of love to Christ, will try to do as Christ did, who "went about doing good," and "came to seek and to save that which was lost."[1] I remind you of this, lest you should have hard thoughts of those above you because they live apart from you, and are in a different line of life: there are kind and Christian hearts among them for all that.

Many thoughts strike one, as one thinks about London—so great and populous.

How many secrets are hidden there! How many tales must be told, if the history of every house and every person were to be made public! London is often called a very wicked place; but perhaps it is not more so than other places. Take three millions and a quarter of people anywhere, and you will find plenty of wickedness among them. But it strikes one more when they are all crowded together as in London. And certainly there is a great deal about London to make the Christian sad. What must London appear then in the eyes of the all-seeing God? He knows the sin that keeps inside the houses, as well as that which comes abroad into the street. By day and by night His eye is on every street, and every house, and every heart. The grand house in the square, the crowded room in the alley, the shop, the counting-house, the theatre, the gin-shop—that all-seeing eye is on them all, and at every moment. There is not a secret hidden in London which God does not know, not a word spoken which He does not hear.

Three millions and a quarter! What a vast multitude, if you could gather them all into one place! Yet, come to London again (if you could come) in a hundred years' time, and not one of these people would you find. All would be gone. You might find their houses, but not them. The same houses might still be standing, the same names might be read at the corners of the streets, but the people would be different. Other voices would be heard in the streets, other men and women would live in the houses. The present inhabitants must be sought in the grave.

And even now this change is gradually taking place; the population of London is constantly changing. These three millions and a quarter are not all the same people as the three millions and a quarter of last year. Death is always at work in London, making gaps in families, and houses, and streets. Here you see

[1] Acts x. 38; Luke xix. 10.

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the shutters up, there you meet a funeral, next you hear afar off the tolling bell. Each speaks a change in the population of London. One is gone. True, the gaps are more than filled: more infants are born than people die. But the change goes on.

Not one of these people is without a soul—a soul that must live for ever. Every man, woman, and child in London, at the east end or the west, in palace or in cellar, has a soul. And, ages hence, when perhaps the great city shall have crumbled into dust, and not one stone remain upon another to tell where London stood—all who ever lived in London, generation after generation, will be living still in another state, happy or miserable for ever.

I said just now, what a vast multitude it would be if all the people of London could be got together into one place. But they will be one day. And more—all who ever lived there at different times will then meet. Do you know what day I mean? I mean that day when not only all London, but all nations, shall be gathered before the Son of man, sitting on the throne of His glory;[1] when the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and the books shall be opened:[2] the day of judgment. All will be there. Of all the busy crowds that throng the streets of London, of all her close-packed population—her nobles, her merchants, her tradesmen, her poor, her beggars, her thieves—not one will be wanting. Willing or unwilling, they must stand before the "great white throne." They cannot flee, they cannot hide.

[1] Matt. xxv. 31, 32. [2] Rev. xx. 12.

Reader, you will be there. Londoner or not, you will be in that crowd. I have been drawing your thoughts to London and her people, but what I have said applies to you, wherever you live. There is an eye upon you every moment—the eye of God; day and night He sees you; you cannot hide. I know not where you live, or how you live; but this I know, that a hundred years hence you will not be living as you do now, for you will be *gone*. But whither? Your body will have been laid in the grave; but where will your soul be? You have a soul, and somewhere that soul must be for ever, in one or the other of two states—either happy in the presence of God, or miserable, lost, and ruined.

For city and country, for rich and poor, for the busy thousands of London, for the dweller in the lone cottage, for the emigrant in his distant home—for me, for you, for all—there is one only way to be safe and happy when that great change shall come. It is this—to flee now to Jesus Christ for pardon and life. He once died for sinners; He now calls them. Even this little tract comes to tell you of His grace and love. There is a kind welcome with Him for all. May the Holy Spirit incline your heart to seek Him! Dwell where you may, in mansion or cottage, in city or field, in stately square or narrow court, this is the way you must take to be safe—you must flee to Jesus.

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A Good Conscience.



THE LITTLE ONE KNOWS THAT IT HAS DONE WRONG.

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A Good Conscience.



It is a happy thing to have a good conscience towards God and man; to have no one whom you are afraid to meet; to be able to think even of God Himself without misgivings.

We may often learn from little children. Look at a child who has been naughty—how it shrinks from its mother. At other times it will run to her first in every trouble, and hide its little head in her lap, and sob forth its sorrows, sure of comfort and help. But now it keeps away; or, if it must come, it comes with blushing face and downcast eyes, which tell plainly that something is amiss. The mother perhaps only finds out by the child's looks that it has done wrong: but the little one itself knows it, and so cannot meet her as usual; it has not a good conscience.

An evil conscience towards God shows itself in like manner, unless conscience be so blunted by sin that it has left off doing its work—the worst state of all. In his inmost heart the sinner knows he is in the wrong. The consequence is that he hates the thought of God. He is not fond of being alone; and a sleepless night—to lie on his bed in the dark, with no one near, and not a sound to be heard—this he dislikes above everything. Because at such a time his thoughts are apt, as it were, to bring him into the presence of God, and set him face to face with his Maker. There is no noise then to drown thought, no business to fill the mind, no company to distract the attention. Troublesome thoughts will come, and therefore he hates and fears such times.

He would not, if he had a good conscience. A sleepless night is often a happy time to such, for the very reason that makes this man dislike it so much; because then they can hold communion with God undisturbed. But this man has not a good conscience, and therefore is afraid of God. Like Adam and Eve, when they had eaten of the forbidden fruit, he tries to hide himself from Him.[1] He cannot do it. There is not a thing, a word, or a thought, that God does not know. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."[2] In every place of sin, in every scene of folly, in the midst of companions, alone on his bed, the all-seeing eye is on him. He cannot hide. But if he can *fancy* he does, if he can but forget the eye that sees him, this is some comfort: poor miserable man!—the only comfort he has with regard to God.

Does any such person read these words? The eyes that rest upon this

[1] Gen. iii. 8. [2] Prov. xv. 3.

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page—are they eyes that fear to meet God, because of an evil conscience? You are the very person I wish to speak to in this tract. I had such as you in mind when I sat down to write. I beg you to read on to the end. I wish to be your friend. My object is to help you to get rid of the load of an evil conscience, and to find the blessing of a good one. This is to be done: it has been done with many. It is God's work, not man's; yet God sometimes does it by means of man's words. O God, do Thou give Thy Holy Spirit to both writer and reader, and bless these words, for Christ's sake!

Let us go back for a moment to the little child. But an hour has passed since we saw it coming with downcast eyes and unwilling steps to its mother; and now look at it. The mother is sitting at work, and the little one is playing at her side, its face all smiles and sunshine again. Every now and then you hear its merry laugh; and see! it gets up in its glee to show its mother the funny thing it has made. There is no fear now. What has made the change? The child is *forgiven*. The mother saw something was wrong, and when she asked, the child confessed what it had done, and with sobs and tears begged to be forgiven. And it is forgiven, and seems now to love its mother more than ever, and to feel even happier than before in being with her.

Reader, there is forgiveness for you too, full and free forgiveness. As with the child, so with you,—the thing that spoils your peace, and makes you fear and try to hide, is sin. Get rid of sin, and you might have a good conscience and be happy. You may get rid of sin, you may have a good conscience, you may be happy. Jesus Christ died for sinners; the just for the unjust, the innocent for the guilty, on purpose that poor sinners might be forgiven. There lies the secret of peace and of a good conscience. An atonement has been made, God has accepted it, and all that sinners have to do is to repent and believe. I mean, of course, a *true* belief; not merely giving credit to the fact that Jesus Christ did die for sinners, but trusting their souls on that great atonement, and with their heart laying hold of Christ to save them. The sinner who does this is forgiven. He has not made amends for *one* sin, for he could not; he has not paid a farthing of the debt he owed, for he had nothing to pay; and yet he is forgiven—fully forgiven, freely forgiven. Because the debt had been paid already by Jesus Christ, and His blood had atoned for his sins.

Reader, this is the way to have fear turned into love. You will never get rid of your load, and never like to think of God, and never enjoy being alone with Him and your own heart, till you go to Jesus Christ. Many think they can get a good conscience in other ways. They will lead a better life, they will break off from this sin or that, they will keep the sabbath and attend the house of God. Do not try this plan. It never has answered, and it never will. It is quite right to do all this, but it is beginning at the wrong end. You must go to Christ *first*. Unless you go straight to Christ you will fail.

If you were in debt you could not wipe out the old score by not running up a new one. Keep as strictly as you might to that rule, the old bill would

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yet be due, you would be a debtor still. And if you could live from this day forward without once sinning again, yet, if your old sins were not done away, you could never have a good conscience, for you would be an unpardoned sinner still. I say to you then, in the words of John the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."[1] Go straight to Christ, and all the rest will follow: a clear conscience, a better life, sins forsaken, sabbaths well spent, and the law of God loved and obeyed.

But it is one thing to *get* a good conscience, and another to *keep* it. This is only to be done by going, again and again, to that same blood of sprinkling by which at first the conscience was cleansed, and by constant watchfulness and prayer. Even the apostle Paul found great pains necessary: "And herein do I *exercise* myself," said he, "to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men."[2] Sin indulged soon makes a distance between the soul and God. Every Christian knows this. Carelessness or want of prayer quickly tells upon the conscience.

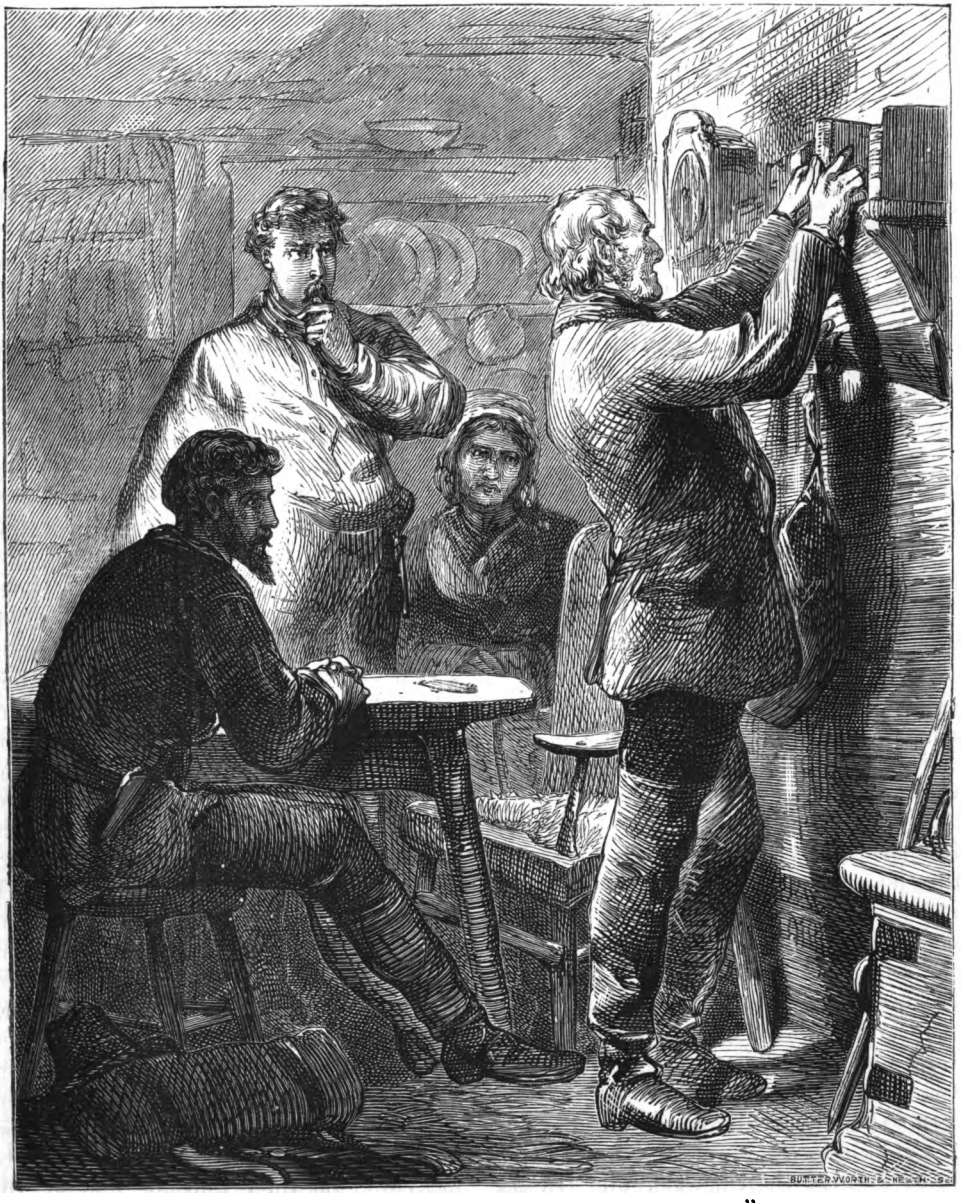
The worst state of all is when conscience sleeps. Neglect makes conscience dull; every time its voice is slighted its power becomes less; and, if this goes on, it will not speak at all at last. Beware of that. It is no good sign when you can sin, and feel no twinge; when you can laugh at your old fears. What does this show? Not that you are safe; only that you are hard. It may seem more pleasant to go boldly on in sin, fearing nothing. But there was more hope of you when you did fear. You have lost something in getting rid of those fears. The worst state for a man is when God says, "Let him alone."[1] for then the Holy Spirit, who used to strive with him by conscience, leaves him to himself, to his own evil heart, his own sinful inclinations, his own work, his own wages,—and, "The wages of sin is death."[2] Do not quench the Spirit, then, by turning a deaf ear to conscience. But remember it is God Himself speaking, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him."[3] Go to God in prayer, and ask Him for Jesus Christ's sake to give you back a good conscience. And, lastly, guard it well when you have it. You cannot do it yourself, for you are sinful and weak. Ask for the Holy Spirit. For each day's temptations, seek this help. Traps and pitfalls lie in your way, and a great enemy is always watching to rob you of your treasure and bring you back to sin and misery. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." That is the *command*. And then comes the *promise:* "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth. . . . I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

[1] John i. 29. [2] Acts xxiv. 16.

[1] Hosea iv. 17. [2] Rom. vi. 23. [3] Hosea xiv. 4. [4] Matt. xxvi. 41; John xiv. 16, 18.

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PRIZE THE BIBLE.



"THE POOR MAN TOOK DOWN A WELL-WORN BIBLE."

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Prize the Bible.



Two men were travelling to the far west in America, one a sceptic, and the other a Christian. The former was ready on every occasion to denounce religion as an imposture, and its professors as hypocrites. According to his own account, he always suspected persons who made pretensions to piety, and took particular care of his property when those he called saints were about him.

On this journey he and his companion had travelled late one evening, and were in a wilderness. They at last came to a solitary log hut, and rejoiced at the prospect of a shelter, however humble. They asked leave to go in, and were allowed. The hut seemed almost as dreary and comfortless as the surrounding wilderness, and there was nothing pleasing in the look of its inhabitants. These were an elderly man, his wife, and two sons—sunburnt, hardy, and rough. They were however seemingly hospitable, and welcomed the travellers to such homely fare as the forest afforded.

But this air of kindness might be put on to deceive their guests, who became seriously afraid of intended evil. It was a lonely place, suited to deeds of robbery and blood. In case of violence no help was at hand. The travellers told their fears to each other, and resolved that on going to their part of the hut, in which there were two rooms, they would secure it as well as they could against the entrance of their host, would have their weapons of defence at hand, and would watch one at a time through the night, so that one should be always on guard, while the other slept.

Having made their arrangements, they joined the family, partook of their homely fare, and, as the evening advanced, spoke of retiring to rest. The old man said it had been his practice, in better times, to commend his family to God before they went to rest at night; that he still continued the practice, and, if the strangers had no objection, would do it now. The Christian rejoiced to find a brother in the wilderness, and even the infidel could not conceal his satisfaction at the proposal. The poor man took down a well-worn Bible, on which no dust had gathered, though age had marked it, and reverently read a portion from its sacred pages. He then prayed. He acknowledged the goodness of God, supplicated His protection, and implored pardon, guidance, grace, and salvation by the atonement of Christ. He prayed also for the strangers, that they might be prospered on their journey, and at the

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close of their earthly journey might, through faith in Jesus Christ, find a home in heaven. He was evidently a man of prayer, and his humble cottage was a place where prayer was wont to be made.

The travellers retired to their room. According to their previous arrangement, the infidel was to keep watch first, but instead of priming his pistols, and preparing for an attack, he wrapped himself up in his great-coat, and covered himself in a blanket as quietly as if he never thought of danger. His friend reminded him of their plan, and asked how he had lost his fears. He felt the force of the question and of all it meant, and had the frankness to acknowledge that he could not but feel himself as safe as at a New England fireside, in any hut in a forest where the Bible was read as the old man had read it, and where prayer was offered as he prayed.

The value of the Bible springs from the importance of the knowledge it imparts. It reveals to man his true condition, discovers a Saviour, opens to view life and immortality, and points out the path that leads to heaven.

An eminent Christian remarks:—"I am a creature of a day; passing through life as an arrow through the air; till a few moments hence I drop into an unchangeable eternity. I want to know *one thing*—the way to heaven; how to land safe on that happy shore. God Himself has condescended to teach the way. For this very end He came from heaven; He hath written it down in a book. Oh! give me that book; at any price give me the book of God. I have it. Here is knowledge enough for me."

Would you be truly wise?—prize this knowledge. Amidst the trifles that amuse, and the cares that weigh down the mind, religious truth claims the first attention; yet, alas! multitudes are pleased with fictions, and intent on trifles light as vanity, while they neglect knowledge of eternal importance. Would you enjoy salvation?—shun this common sin, and let your thoughts dwell on the momentous subjects connected with God, with Jesus, with redemption, with your own soul, and eternal life. Prize the Bible. Meditate on it with prayer for the teaching of the Holy Spirit. The truly blessed are represented as delighting in the law of the Lord, and meditating therein day and night.

The EFFECTS of such meditations are most happy. The devout reader of the word of God brings forth the fruits of holiness. He is like a tree planted by the rivers of water, in a dry and thirsty land.[1] These feed its roots, and cover it with verdure and fruit when all around is burnt up and desolate. Divine truth, as revealed in God's word, has a power to sanctify, which does not belong to the knowledge derived from His most amazing works: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." But what do they proclaim? They reveal the eternal power and Godhead of their Maker, but they do not show the way to happiness. Their teachings change no sinful heart. Great as are their splendour and magnificence, their instructions and influence are confined within a narrow space. They reveal a Creator; they show Him wise and

[1] Psa. i. 3.

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mighty; and there their lessons end. But the teaching of His holy word does not stop there: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."[1] These descriptions of the effects of Divine truth should impress on every mind the importance and necessity of searching the Scriptures, and of praying for the Holy Spirit's blessing on their regular and frequent perusal.

When David lived, only a small part of the blessed volume of heavenly truth was written, and a still smaller portion when, as a means of securing prosperity, God enjoined on Joshua the perpetual study of His word.[2] All that could be in his hands was the Pentateuch, and perhaps the book of Job. David had but a small portion of *our* Bible. The New Testament was unknown to him. Many of the books of the Old Testament did not then exist. Even the small portion of the Scriptures that these ancient saints had received contained so much truth, as to be more precious "than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb," and sufficient to make those who received and loved it "wise unto salvation." How much then should we, who are favoured with the whole of the sacred volume, prize the inestimable treasure, and seek heavenly wisdom from it, as the great depository of the precious truth that promotes love to God and universal holiness? If you read but one book, let it be the Bible. If you read many, make the Bible the first, and never neglect it. Meditate on the truths revealed, as the most important help in the way to heaven. A soul without meditation is like a garden adorned with some flowers, but overrun by many weeds. The Son of God Himself retired at times from His labours of love to scenes of solitude and silence,—to a garden or a lonely mountain. Yet He had no inbred corruptions to detect and subdue. How much more must His imperfect followers need the salutary influence of occasional solitude and meditation, with all their sins and imperfections?

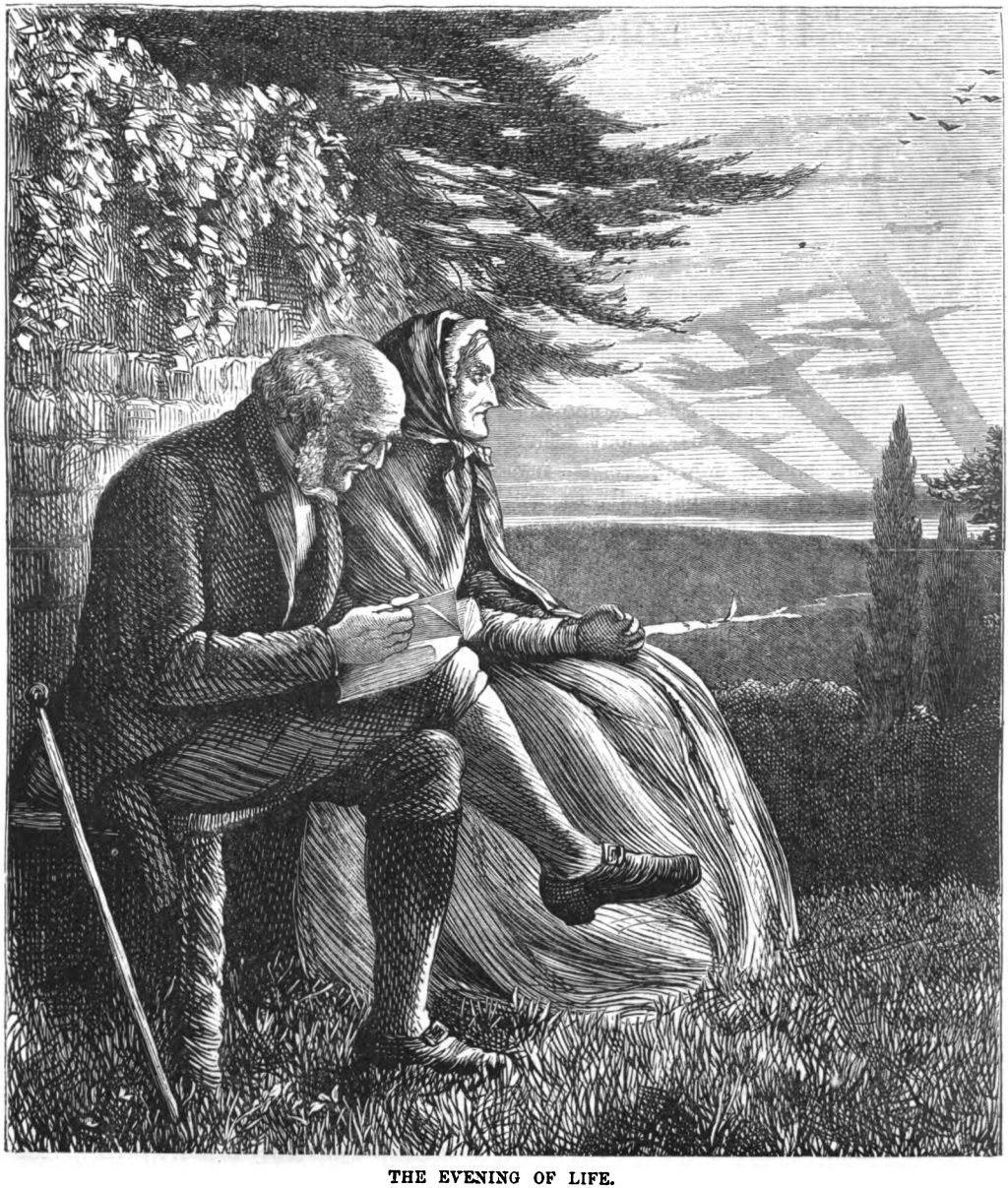
The blessed effect of heavenly truth exists in every glorified spirit, that, taught from the Scriptures, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, and guided by Jesus, has passed from earth to heaven. It is displayed also in the life of every genuine Christian upon earth, who walks with God, and brings forth the fruits of holiness, which are by Jesus Christ. The Scriptures furnished the seeds of all those excellences.[1]

[1] Psa. xix. 7-10. [2] Josh. i. 8.

[1] Luke viii. 11.

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"How long have I to Live?"



THE EVENING OF LIFE.

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"How long have I to Live?"



This is a simple question; who can answer it? It is an important one; to how few is it welcome! It was once put by an old man to an ancient king,[1] but is alike suited to those who are in the bloom of youth, or in the strength of middle life. Will you, reader, think over it for a few moments? Do not say, "I am busy about other matters, and cannot now give it my attention;" or, "I am naturally averse to hear about death; I would rather turn to a more lively and interesting subject." It may do you good to pause from your present pursuits, and give heed to the inquiry which is now made.

How long have you to live? There are some truths which we know by experience. They are too plain to our senses to be denied. Of this kind is the fact that our present life must end. Adopt what creed we may, there can be no dispute about our stay in this world. Every man knows that sickness, or accident, or decay, or some other cause, will, sooner or later, terminate his present existence. The end of those who have gone before us plainly tells us, that after a few years we shall have done with the world. All things around us preach to the eye or ear this truth. Every rising and setting sun proclaims that our days are passing. If the clock strike, it tells us that another hour is gone, never to return. The trees put on their leaves, which flourish for a while, then drop and perish on the ground; the plants grow and decay; the birds come in their season, and then depart; the changing face of the sky, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, are so many natural monitors, which tell us that our time is ever flowing on, and our end is drawing nigh.

What changes you have seen among your friends and neighbours! If you have known a town or a village for twenty years, how altered it looks since you first knew it! Where are the children who then sported in the fields and streets? Where are the men of business who took the lead in active life? Some are long since dead, and others are gradually sinking into the silence of the tomb. Where are the old men whose advice guided your youthful feet? Not one, perhaps, is left to remind you of former days. And where are those whom you once called, "My father, my mother, my wife or my husband, my son, my daughter, my brother, my sister, my friend?" They too, possibly, have been buried from your sight. You have seen enough to know that neither youth, nor vigour, nor piety, nor usefulness can arrest the hand of death. All go to one place—the grave.

Then, what have you felt in yourself? It seems to you only a short period since you began to live, and now you find that

[1] 2 Sam. xix. 34.

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much of life is already spent. Perhaps you have been laid down by illness; you were thought to be beyond recovery; and though yet spared, you find you are not so strong as you once were, nor your health so firm. Your sight, hearing, activity, or spirits are not so good as in past years. There is much in your state and feelings which reminds you that you will not live always, and, probably, not much longer in the world.

The *fact* that our present life must end is certain. We are taught this alike by experience and by revelation; but the time, the mode, and the circumstances of its termination are all uncertain. We may waste away under a slow decline, or be rapidly removed by a burning fever. A violent spasm may stop the action of the heart, a small wound may inflame and mortify, or a blood-vessel may suddenly break. As we know not the manner, so we are equally ignorant of the place of our death. We may be laid on our bed, or we may be stricken when in the work-shop or the field. We may be in the land of our fathers, or far away among strangers. The time may be at hand, or a few more years may have yet to run their round. No man, however wise, can tell in what way he shall come to the important hour when he shall pass from the present life and enter on the solemn scenes of eternity. Happy are they who, in the words and with the pious feelings of Baxter, can say, "Lord, I am ready, *when* Thou wilt, *where* Thou wilt, and *how* Thou wilt."

HOW THEN OUGHT YOU TO LIVE? After all, this question concerns you more than the one which has been first proposed. Consider what and where you are. An intelligent being, placed for a short season in a condition of trial, and accountable to God; holding your life at an uncertainty, and possessing a soul that must exist for ever in happiness or in misery. What is the manner of your life? Does it answer the end for which life was given? Have you set God's glory before you as your great object, and His commands as your rule? Have you received your daily mercies from Him for twenty, forty, or sixty years, and to the present time remained insensible and unthankful to His claims? What have you done with your time and your talents? Has the Bible been faithfully read or neglected? Has the house of God been forsaken, or has it been regularly your place of resort? Has the sabbath been to you a delight, or have its sacred hours been disregarded and profaned? Have you "lived soberly, righteously, and godly" in this present world, or have you yielded yourself as a servant to the world, the flesh, and the devil? Have you fled, under a deep sense of your guilt and danger, to Christ as your Saviour and Refuge? or are you living a stranger to His gospel and His grace? Feeling your ignorance and natural aversion to that which is good, have you in earnest prayer asked for the blessed influence of the Holy Spirit, to lead you into all truth? or have you resisted His light and love, and are you blindly rushing on in unbelief? Are you living in the hope of an entrance into eternal glory at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? or are you putting away all thoughts of judgment and eternity, living like the beasts that perish

These are plain and serious questions,

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and claim plain and serious replies. If they must be answered against yourself, surely it is high time that you should arouse yourself to the first and chief business of life. There is no time to lose, for you know not how long you have to live.

If you would live happily and usefully, and die safely, there must be *the life of faith* on the Son of God. Like the apostle Paul, you must be able to say, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." The Lord Jesus claims your faith and love. You are undone, and must perish without Him. On His grace you must depend day by day, and in communion with Him you must seek your sweetest pleasures.

Where there is true faith there will be *the life of holiness.* Your days will be spent in the fear and service of God. There will be a regard to His will as the rule and ground of your conduct. You will pursue your business, frame your habits, and regulate your actions with a wish to approve yourself to your heavenly Master. You will resist all temptation, avoid all sin, and seek after inward as well as outward purity. To please God will be your highest aim, labouring that you, through grace, may be "accepted of Him." If thus you live the life of faith and holiness, it will be of small moment to you how long your stay in this world may be. You may die soon or die suddenly, but all will be well.

And now let the inquiry be faithfully put to your conscience, in the view of the shortness and uncertainty of life, WHAT IS MY PRESENT STATE OF MIND? Have you such a confidence that you could now enter on your last hours? Upon what does this confidence rest? If it is on the belief that there is *no future world,* or *no future punishment,* then it is built on the vain presumption that there is no just God, that the proofs of Divine revelation are insufficient, that the hopes of the wise and good have been mere delusion, and that only the wicked have been right.—Is your confidence built on *the mercy of God without a Saviour?* Then know, that to all out of Christ God is "a consuming fire;" that He is holy and just, and cannot accept a sinner apart from that way of salvation which He has revealed in His word.—Are you relying on your *morality* and *supposed freedom from gross sin?* Such a title will never secure your future happiness; for it is impossible for you to show that your life has been always such as God can approve, and all that His law requires.—Are you depending on *the mercy of God in Christ Jesus?* Is this dependence attended with deep humility and repentance?—in short, have you faith in the Son of God, with habitual devotion, and a consistent conduct of life? Then, life to you will be a blessing while it lasts, death to you need have no terrors, and a future world will open to you joys which are unfading, unspeakable, and full of glory.

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The Worth and Danger of the Soul.



"A MILLION FOR A MOMENT!"

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The Worth and Danger of the Soul.



MAN has a soul distinct from the body, and it is God's noblest work in this lower creation. Its powers show its worth. It is capable of knowing, loving, admiring, and adoring the blessed God: it is capable of receiving exquisite joy, or of enduring eternal pain, and is destined to immortality. The body will at length fade and perish, but the soul will live for ever. It maybe undone, ruined, wretched; yet still it will be immortal. Self-murder may destroy mortal life, but the life of the soul none can destroy.

The WORTH of the soul is attested by the Father's love, who for it gave His only begotten Son;[1] and by the Saviour's sacrifice and sufferings, who died for us, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.[2] Not for a thing of little worth would the Divine Word have stooped from heaven to earth and become flesh, and the Lord Jesus Christ have suffered and died. The Holy Spirit's work confirms the soul's worth. He strives with perishing souls, and leads them to Jesus and happiness. How deeply have thousands of martyrs felt the worth of the soul. One kissed the stake at which he was to be burned, and said, "Welcome the cross of Christ! welcome everlasting life!" Another, in the flames, exclaimed, "None but Christ; none but Christ!" yet their souls were worth no more than yours, reader, and needed no more anxiety and care.

The Lord Jesus taught the necessity of care for the salvation of the soul by the solemn question: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"[1]

This question refers to a common and dreadful loss—the loss of the soul. The DANGER of experiencing this terrible loss is great. In *many ways* is the soul lost. Sin has undone every child of man. All are "guilty before God,"[2] and "dead in trespasses and sins."[3] In this state nothing more is needful to secure the ruin of the soul than to neglect salvation; as it is written: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"[4] The soul is not like an innocent person, who *may* fall into evil, but like a criminal *already* condemned to death, who must be pardoned or die: not like a healthful man, who *may* contract disease, but like one *already* suffering from a mortal sickness, who must be cured or die. Reader, this is your state: the danger is not that you may become a sinner, and so be liable to condemnation, but that, being already "dead in sins,"[5] you may neglect the only deliverance, and thus be lost for ever.

The danger is evidently great, for *many are lost.* The Lord Jesus says,

[1] John iii. 16. [2] 1 Pet. iii. 18.

[1] Mark viii. 36, 37. [2] Rom. iii. 19. [3] Eph. ii. 1. [4] Heb. ii. 3. [5] Eph. ii. 5.

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"Many are called, but few are chosen."[1] "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat;"[2] "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."[3] Some perish through presumption and self-righteousness;[4] some through indecision; many through lukewarmness;[5] many through open sins; and countless numbers through making light of Jesus. He represents this as a most common cause of eternal ruin.[6] In the parable of the marriage supper, representing the invitations of the gospel, it is related that "all with one consent began to make excuse." To be undone for ever, you need not run into excess of riot; only live and die a trifler, a neglecter of Christ, unconverted and unforgiven, and the dreadful work is done; the soul is lost—lost for all eternity.

Everlasting praises are due to God in the highest, that, precious as the soul is, and great as the danger is of its loss, CHRIST IS ABLE TO SAVE IT, even to the uttermost: "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."[7] The soul committed to His hands is safe: "I know," said the apostle Paul, "whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." His blood blots out the sins of the soul, and cancels all its guilt.[8] His righteousness covers its unrighteousness; for God "hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."[1] His care protects His flock in all circumstances and dangers: My sheep "shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."[2] The souls of all the heirs of salvation are intrusted to His care by the Eternal Father, who has "given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him."[3] Thus safe in His care the soul may smile at death, and will at length be presented before Him a happy conqueror in His heavenly kingdom.

Now, reader, that you have here read of the worth of the soul, of the danger to which it is exposed, of some ways in which it may be lost, and of the grace by which it may be saved, apply all to yourself and think of the Saviour's questions. They refer to a loss which nothing can compensate, that can never be repaired, and which must be bitterly felt by the wretched loser himself.

"What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Our Lord puts the question in the most favourable view for the man of the world—saying in effect, Could you gain the whole world, all its wealth, all its pleasures, and all its honours; could you say of every crown, it is mine; of every people, they are my subjects; of every estate, it is my portion;—could you gain all this, and yet lose your soul, what would it profit you? Would it blunt the sting of pain? Would it make you happy in affliction? No; the whole world could not do so; but Christ can. What would the whole world profit you *in death?* Would it support your sinking

[1] Matt. xxii. 14. [2] Matt. vii. 13. [3] Luke xiii. 24.
[4] Luke xviii. 10; Rom. x. 3. [5] Rev. iii. 15-17.
[6] Matt. xxii. 5; Luke xiv. 18. [7] 1 John iv. 14.
[8] 1 John i. 7; Rev. i. 5.

[1] 2 Cor. v. 21. [2] John x. 28.
John xvii. 2; vi. 37–40.

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spirit, or cheer your dying hour? Ah, it could not; but the holy Saviour would, if He had been your choice. And *one moment after death*, what would it profit you to have had all the world, when nothing is left you but a coffin and a shroud? At *the judgment day* what would it profit you to have been possessor of the world? Would it shield you from the Judge's terrific frown? Could you be cheered by remembering what you once had, when the terrible doom is uttered which all lost souls must hear: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?"[1] O reader, if the whole world would be no compensation for the loss of the soul, how fearful is their madness who lose the soul for a few sinful pleasures; who lose it rather than give up vain and sinful amusements, sabbath-breaking, and ungodly companions; or who lose it sooner than encounter the ridicule of the profane, and rather than take the easy but holy yoke of Jesus!

Consider, too, that this is a loss which can *never be repaired*. What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? What would not the sinner give? Queen Elizabeth is said to have cried out in her last moments, "A million for a moment!" A dying lover of the world said, "Oh that I had been wise, that I had considered my latter end! Ah, death is knocking at my door; and then judgment, the tremendous judgment! How shall I appear, unprepared as I am, before the all-knowing God? Safety is the only thing I now long for. I would gladly part with all my estate, large as it is, or a world, to obtain it. What is there for me in the place whither I am going? Oh that I had sought God on earth! Surely I shall be ruined and destroyed with an everlasting destruction!"

What would not such unhappy neglecters of salvation give in exchange for the soul? But what shall a man give? Ah, nothing! Nothing will he have to give. Were the world his own, and could he give it, it would not buy an hour of time; but nothing will he have to give. Alas! the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and he is not saved. The last opportunity of welcoming the Saviour is gone, and gone or ever.

This irreparable loss must be bitterly felt by the wretched loser himself as *wholly his own;* others will not share it with him. If you lose your soul, all the loss will be felt by yourself; that soul is your own, your only soul: the loss is your own, and when your soul is lost, your all is lost. The sorrow and anguish will be all yours. Now in time, you might be troubled at the loss of earthly possessions; but hope might remain of recovering or replacing them, but what will be your distress and despair, if your soul and heaven be lost! Once lost they can never be regained. Oh, then, while life remains to you, never rest till your soul is safe. Cry to God in the name of Christ, for the gift of the Holy Spirit to renew your soul.

[1] Matt. xxv. 41.

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REFUGE.



"REFUGE! REFUGE!" EXCLAIMS THE PANTING MAN.

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REFUGE.



THE autumn sun shone brightly upon the land of Judea. Its cities, from their terraced roofs, reflected the burning rays. Its plains were lively with the voices of reapers, who, resting at mid-day from their toil, enlivened the hour of rest by talking of the wonders their fathers had seen in the land of Egypt, ere they were delivered from the cruel bondage of the tyrant Pharaoh; for the people of Israel were now in prosperity, and had not yet turned from the worship of God to idolatry. The distant mountains were yet green with the foliage of the waning summer; and the vineyards on the hillsides proclaimed, by their luxuriant crops, the fertility of the land which the Lord had blessed. Peace and plenty were seen around. The royal psalmist, David, celebrated such a scene in the same country, in words of devout gratitude: "Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness; and Thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing." [1]

Upon this happy scene, at this hour of mid-day rest, it would be pleasant to let the imagination dwell.

[1] Psa. lxv. 11–13.

But all is not repose and happiness. From the thicket, hard by the group of labourers in the field, a man comes forth whose countenance is full of terror as he hurries on in his flight. His upper garment has been thrown away, and his clothes are soiled. But other stains than these are visible; they are stains of blood yet scarcely dry.

As the fugitive runs rapidly across the stubble, the startled reapers shout aloud, and call to him to draw near. But he heeds them not; or, hearing them, he but increases his efforts, and explains his haste by crying, "Refuge! refuge!" [1]

The cry is well understood; and the man passes on, uninterrupted by his horror-stricken countrymen, who, watching him till he disappears in the distance, then turn their excited looks towards the spot where he first came in sight. Their expectations are soon realised. The avenger of blood is upon the track of the manslayer. He has traced his footsteps, or, losing these, he well knows whither the man whom he pursues is hurrying; and he unerringly follows on. In his hand he bears the sword with which the Divine law has armed him; and his features show plainly the conflicting feelings of grief for the slain, and stern determination to execute swift justice upon the slayer.

We follow the unhappy fugitive.

[1] See Num. xxxv.

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Panting and trembling with unwonted and severe exertion, he yet dares not stop to rest his wearied limbs. Thirsting with extreme heat, the brook by the way offers its tempting stream in vain. The avenger of blood is behind him; and the shortest pause would lessen the distance between the pursuer and the pursued. In terror every moment of hearing the footsteps of his determined executioner, he strains every nerve to escape the threatened doom, by reaching the appointed city of refuge, the only place of safety for the Israelitish manslayer.

He gains ground. Who would not flee swiftly when life is at stake? He has left behind him the fields: he treads, with reviving hope, the smooth and level road. But yet he stops not. To the inquiring look or word of each passenger, he gives in reply but one word, "Refuge!" It is enough: no further hindrance is offered; he passes on.

Many a mile has been passed over, but the refuge has not yet been reached, and there is safety only in continued flight. Behind him is the avenger, before him is the city; and until within its walls he dares not rest. Oh for a cluster of ripe grapes from yonder vineyard—a draught of cold water from yonder spring, or of milk from yonder flock! But what is the temporary endurance of thirst and fatigue compared with threatened violent death? He passes on, and vineyard, spring, and flock are left behind.

The road divides: will he not now be perplexed? May he not be mistaken as to the course he ought to take? No; without slackening his pace, he but casts his eyes upon the friendly guidepost. One glance is enough. He who runs may read. Thither the direction points: one word reveals all that the manslayer seeks to know: that word is, "Refuge."

The sun is declining. From the walls of the city of refuge the watchman looks across the plain, and, looking, his careless and languid glance is suddenly exchanged for the fixed gaze of newly awakened interest. The pursued and the pursuer, the manslayer and the avenger of blood, are both seen in the distance. Weary, distressed, halting, almost exhausted, the fugitive draws near; with persevering tenacity the avenging follower holds on his course, the glittering weapon, yet unsheathed, in his hand. Nearer and nearer they approach. "Refuge! refuge!" exclaims the panting man, as he attains the lengthened shadow of the city wall. The excited watchman shouts encouragement. One struggle more: the open gateway is reached; the rescued victim has passed the boundary, and staggering onward a few steps farther, sinks fainting with extreme fatigue. But *he is safe.* He has reached the city of refuge, within whose walls the avenger dares not enter. Foiled in his purpose, he slackens his pursuit; and, sheathing his sword, he refers to the appointed tribunal the inquisition for blood.

Behold, reader, in this escaped manslayer, a picture of the sinner who, burdened with the sense of his guilt and danger, flees "for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before him."[1] Conscious of his sins; stained with crime; convinced of the unswerving and righteous severity of the law he has broken; and persuaded that the pursuit is already opened upon him, which may end, at

[1] Heb. vi. 18.

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any moment, in his eternal and utter ruin—he perceives the urgent necessity for instant flight. In what direction? Happily for him—happily for all under like conviction—the same revelation that tells him the full amount of his peril opens also to his terrified soul a way of escape, and warns him to "flee from the wrath to come." There is a refuge for the guilty, hell-deserving soul, more sure and efficacious than were the ancient cities of refuge to the manslayer in Israel. To that refuge he turns. In his course, and with the full view of the danger in which he is, the voice of worldly friendships, and the incitements of worldly gratifications, fall unheeded upon his ear, or present themselves unavailingly to his sight. He dares not turn aside from the path, nor take off, for one moment, his attention from the object which lies before him. He is fleeing for refuge: shall he linger while the avenger is in dire pursuit? He is striving for salvation: shall he be turned aside, to his everlasting undoing?

Onward! onward! Justice is on his track; but mercy, refuge, safety are set before him in the gospel. The way is plain: "The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." [1] The directions are short and simple: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." [2] He *cannot* loiter on the road. Fear and hope alternately urge or attract him forward, until the blessed refuge be attained. At length he reaches it. Exhausted by long and painful spiritual travel, as he may be, he yet reaches it. He enters it, and is safe. Justice no longer pursues. "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." [1]

Reader, have you thus fled for refuge? Be assured, if you have not, that it is no imaginary danger to the full knowledge of which you are called to arouse yourself, and from which you are now entreated to flee. The peril in which the manslayer of old was placed by his involuntary homicide, is small compared with the tremendous danger which threatens you. Guilty of innumerable breaches of the Divine law, which delivers you into the power of Divine justice, and writes against you the sentence of eternal death—how can you escape the Omnipotent Avenger?

Blessed be God, there is an Omnipotent Saviour, willing and waiting to deliver from wrath. The motive for His mercy, and the mode of His exercising it, are revealed in the gospel: and there He bids you come unto Him that you may have life—eternal life.

Reader, as you are a sinner, seek the grace of the Holy Spirit to flee for refuge to Christ; as your danger is most imminent, be persuaded to lose no time in doing so; while, as God is true, be encouraged to believe that "him that cometh" the Lord will "in no wise cast out," [2] for the Son of man was "lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." [3]

[1] Isa. xxxv. 8. [2] Acts xvi. 31.

[1] Rom. viii. 1. [2] John vi. 37.
[3] John iii. 15.

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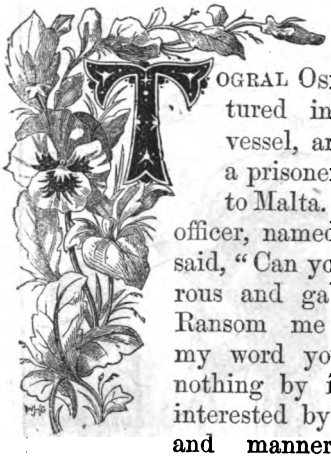
THE FRIEND THAT HAS NO EQUAL.



"RANSOM ME; AND TAKE MY WORD YOU SHALL LOSE NOTHING BY IT!"

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The Friend that has no Equal.



Togral Osman was captured in a Turkish vessel, and carried as a prisoner and a slave to Malta. To a French officer, named Arnaud, he said, "Can you do a generous and gallant action? Ransom me; and take my word you shall lose nothing by it." Arnaud, interested by Osman's air and manners, complied with his request, and paid nearly three hundred pounds for his ransom. From that time Osman showed the most fervent gratitude to his benefactor. He soon returned the money, and added valuable presents. In 1731 he rose to be the first minister of the Ottoman empire. He now sent for Arnaud, that he might further display his gratitude. Arnaud arrived, bringing with him twelve Turkish prisoners whom he had ransomed. Osman received them in the presence of the great officers of state, with strong marks of affection; then, pointing to the ransomed captives, said to those about him, "Behold these, your brethren, now enjoying the sweets of liberty after having groaned in slavery; this Frenchman is their deliverer. I was myself a slave, loaded with chains, streaming with blood, and covered with wounds; this is my benefactor, to whom I am indebted for life, liberty, and fortune, and everything I enjoy. Without knowing me, he paid a large ransom for me, sent me away upon my bare word, and gave me a ship to carry me. Where is there a Mussulman capable of such generosity?"

If such were the feelings of a man to his benefactor, how much more should we feel towards the Lord Jesus Christ! He has paid for man a more costly ransom; He delivers from a more degrading and wretched slavery. He is the Friend that has no equal; far excelling all friends besides, and in all things their superior.

He excels all others in His person. For what are my friends, however estimable and dear? They are dying mortals, from whom I soon must part: but He is "the First and the Last," who was dead and is alive; the King of kings and Lord of lords; "God manifest in the flesh;" "over all, God blessed for ever."[1] They wither like a flower; He imparts life and health, and is the Giver of eternal life. They are going to the dust; but He has "ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things."[2]

He far excels also in the greatness of His love. The strongest affection that can glow in a human heart is feeble compared with that of Jesus. It is related that in a time of bloodshed at Rome, a servant, anxious to preserve

[1] Rev. i. 17; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Rom. ix. 5. [2] Eph. iv. 10.

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his master's life, whose destruction was sought, changed clothes with him, sent him out privately from the house, and then, pretending to be the master, lay down on his bed, and there was slain in his stead. Greater love hath no man than this; but even this bears no more comparison with the Saviour's love than a spark to the sun, or an atom to the world; for He, in a mysterious way, stooped from the height of infinite glory, and took our nature purposely to suffer and die: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and . . . humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."[1] He laid down His life as the substitute for sinners, that they might have life instead of death, and heaven instead of hell, and endured the hiding of His Father's countenance so as to cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" that the lost and undone might come near to God, and be with Him for ever and ever.

In 1741, at Northampton assizes, a poor Irishman was sentenced to death for murder. Dr. Doddridge believed him innocent, and so exerted himself in his behalf that a respite was obtained. Nothing could be more tender than his expressions of gratitude. He said, "Every drop of my blood thanks you, for you have had compassion on every drop of it. You are my deliverer, and you have a right to me. If I live I am your property, and I will be a faithful subject." How small were his obligations to his kind benefactor compared with ours to the Lord that ransomed us! The Christian may utter acknowledgments far more expressive than those of the grateful Turk or the poor Irishman. "I was a slave bound in the chains of sin. I was a criminal, deservedly condemned to die. My Lord ransomed me; to Him I am indebted for liberty more precious than freedom from earthly bonds; for life that will issue in eternal life. And the ransom which He paid for me was not silver or gold, but His own blood. He has a right to me, and to all I am and all I have. He bought me as His own when He died in my place. Let every power of my body and soul thank Him, for He has had mercy upon me."

The Lord Jesus far surpasses all other friends in the good He can bestow. If it were possible to have friends whose hearts were as full of love as His, yet they could not give what Christ bestows, and you absolutely need. You have sins, and they must be forgiven, or you will be lost eternally—Jesus forgives sins! You have a sinful heart that must be made new, or you must perish—Jesus gives the Holy Spirit, by whom to work that mighty change. You have a soul in danger—Jesus can avert its ruin, and secure its salvation. You have a hell to escape and a heaven to reach—Jesus saves from hell and exalts to heaven. Before you reach eternity you have to pass through a troubled world, to encounter sorrow, sickness, and death—Jesus supports through this wilderness;

[1] 2 Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 6.

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cheers affliction with inward comforts; makes sickness better than health, and death than life. You must die alone, and go alone to meet your God—Jesus fills the departing spirit with sweetest peace, and welcomes it to a heavenly home! He bestows on the mouldering dust life and immortality on the resurrection morning. Christ can do all these things. Other friends may cheer for a moment, but He will bless throughout a whole eternity. Thus He is what other friends, the best and dearest, can never be. Whether it be father or mother, husband or wife, affectionate child, or brother, or sister. He is far, far more than all these united.

The friendship of Christ is also undying and everlasting. As far as this world is concerned, the dearest ties of earthly friendships must soon be broken. Soon you may have to say, My parent, or my child, my husband, or my wife, my brother, or my sister, is dead; the heart is cold now that lately glowed with love. But the love of Christ to His people ever continues: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."[1]

Thus Jesus is the Friend that has no equal; and He is willing,—oh wonderful love!—to be all this to any of the lost and guilty children of men that will flee to Him as their refuge from sin and condemnation; for "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "Come," says this heavenly Friend, "come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." What wider invitation could He give? What better blessing could He promise?

Are you, reader, a partaker of His salvation? Has the Holy Spirit opened your heart to attend to these things? Or have you slighted His claims, and resisted the Holy Ghost? If you enjoy His friendship, a proof that you are thus enriched will be furnished by your supreme love to Him. Whatever else His friends love and prize, they love and prize Him more. This is their experience in all ages, and in all lands. Peter said, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." Krishna, an early convert in Bengal, said of the Saviour, "I love Him, but not as He loves me." A young Christian lady was asked by an affectionate father, "Can you leave us, Mary?" She calmly answered—

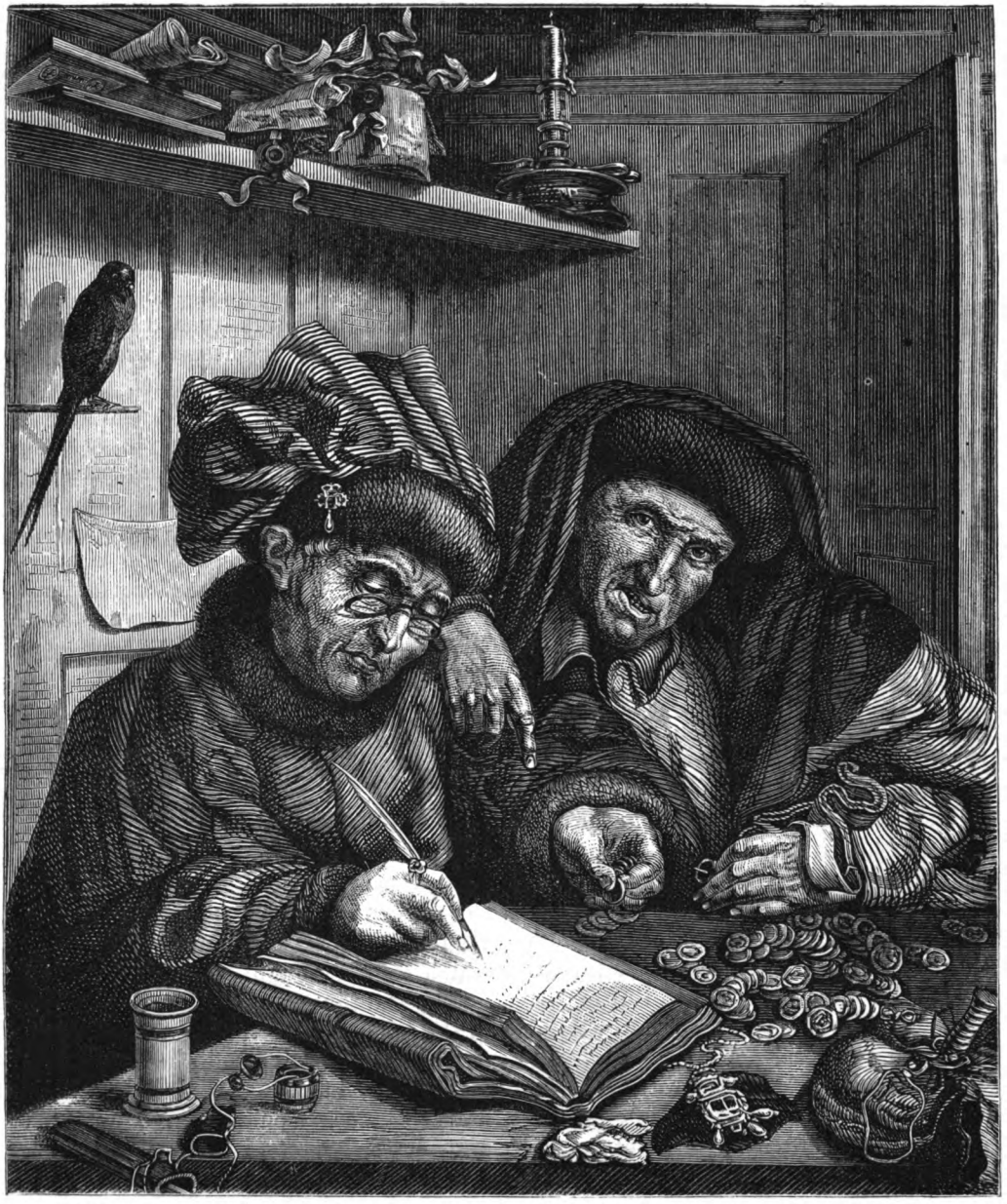
> "Yes: Nature, all thy fond delights
> And tender ties we know;
> But love more strong than death unites
> To HIM that bids us go."

Actuated by such principles, the friends of Jesus do His will and live to His glory, and under the Spirit's teaching are conformed to His image and travel to His kingdom. There, through all eternity, they will rejoice in the love and celebrate the praise of the FRIEND THAT HAS NO EQUAL.

[1] Rom viii. 38, 39.

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"How much are you Worth?"



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"How much are you Worth?"



This is not an untimely question. Who are you whose eye now rests upon the words that are printed on this small paper? If you are *wealthy*, it may be well to know that wealth does not make your worth. If you are *poor*, it will do you good to be assured that you are rich in an immortal soul, and that you may be strong, honoured, happy, in devoting that soul, renewed and thankful, to Him who "became poor, that through His poverty we might be rich." If you are *aged*, happily it is not too late to turn this question to some good account. If you are *in trouble*, it should comfort you to know how precious you are in the eyes of Him who is "able to save" you "to the uttermost." If you are *young*—a blessed day it is for you to know what you *are*, what you may *be*, what you may *do*, and what boundless stores of joy are laid up for you in the heart of Him who alone can tell how much YOU are worth.

What are you? A spiritual being. You make use of fleshly instruments in acquiring knowledge or pleasure, and in doing what you resolve. Without making use of these outward means, you can think—you can picture things afar off—you can call up the past—you can look partly into the future—you can hope or fear—you can be brightened with joy, or you can be darkened by grief. This is what you are at this instant; and this is what you *will never cease to be;* for though death will cover those sparkling eyes through which you look out upon the landscapes of earth, on the glorious sea, on the starry sky, on the wonders of art, or on the "human face divine," death will not veil the eye of your soul. In the hour when you were born, you began a life that will not end. No sword can pierce it, no poison can touch it; it is a river that still flows on, on, and on, still flowing: it is like a flame that burns, and for ever will burn; it is a spirit's life—immortal!

Ancient men thought it might be so; wicked men feared lest it should prove so; Jesus Christ assures us that it is so. He tells us of the "life and immortality" which He has brought "to light"—of the unseen state into which we are passing—of the solemn trial that awaits us after death—of the bliss and the woe, alike everlasting, in which the trial of that day will fix us. You are *this*. How much are you *worth?* Remember of how much worth you have been thought. When

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your mother and your father smiled upon their babe, could they have told your worth to them? Think of all your friends have ever done for you—of what your country does for you—of what wise and good men have done for you; especially think of what God has done—done for *you*—how carefully He has tended you, how richly He has provided for you—with what almighty goodness He has watched around your bed, and along your path. He has borne with you and spared you; He has sometimes saved you from death, when others fell. He has given you the power of knowing Him, and the means of knowing Him, so that everywhere you may feel yourself to be in His temple, with His eye upon you, with His solemn voice speaking words of truth and love to you, and His glory all around you; and there have been times, surely, when you have been so impressed with this, that no signs nor sounds from heaven could have said more plainly to you, "God is here!"—here to watch you, here to bless you, here to listen to the prayer of your heart. *His* is your body, fashioned by His power according to His perfect wisdom, and only He who made it knows its worth. His is your mind, your soul, your spirit; for it is the "inspiration of the Almighty" that hath given you "understanding."[1]

And does it not seem a reasonable thing that you should spend a thought on the value of a being which is so precious to the Lord of the universe? Were all the gold of the mines, all the pearls of the deep, all the spices of the east, all the treasures and royalties of the world, heaped together in one rich pile, *you* are worth them all. You would be worth them all, if such piles were as countless as the sands on the shore.

What are *you* worth? Come with me, in your thoughts, into yonder valley. Behind us is the crowded city, where amazing things have come to pass. Here flows gently through that river which has just been crossed by four men in the early moonlight, and they stop within the grove of olives. One speaks to the other three some words of sadness and of warning, and He leaves them, and goes deeper into the shade. He is alone. He prays. As He prays, He is in agony: and in His agony, great drops as it were of blood fall upon the ground. Why does that "Man of sorrows" bear this? He speaks of "a cup." What cup? It is not for Himself He suffers. No. It is for the sake of God, that His holy character may be seen without a stain, His righteousness without a cloud, while He has pity on the miseries of those who have broken His laws, pardons their sins, and restores them to His favour. And it is for the sake of man, that he may have a ground of hope, a reason for expecting pardon, a title to salvation. Not only did the Son of God suffer in the garden for these ends, He had them before Him from eternity, when He looked in love upon us; they were in His heart when He was made of a woman; they filled His thoughts throughout the holy life by which He "pleased God," and in the awful hour in which He bowed His head and died upon the cross, offering "Himself without spot to God" as "a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." These great objects explain His rising from the dead;

[1] Job xxxii. 8.

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for *that* was the proof that the ransom was accepted; and still He appears "in the presence of God for us," making "intercession for us."

How much are *you* worth, redeemed at the cost of such a life, of blood so precious, of a death so accursed? Till you can tell what Christ is worth, what His atonement is worth, how impossible it will be to say *what* you are worth!

It may be that when you think of what you are just now, remembering your sins, and looking with bitter sorrow on the time you have squandered in vanity—on the opportunities for doing good which you have thrown away—you wonder at the love of Christ, and you find it hard to conceive why He should love you so. But consider *what you may become.* It is something to be a penitent—"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth:" it is more to be accepted in the Beloved, "reconciled to God by the death of His Son:" it is much more to be a son of God, made like Him by His Spirit, daily seeking to please Him, and by His grace subduing the evils that are within you, and walking in the footsteps of your Saviour's blessed example. Jesus died for us that we might become *all this;* and that you might become this, He is ever ready to bestow His grace upon you. Look, then, at what you are capable of being, before you answer the question that is now put to you.

See, then, what you may live *to do.* Rejoice to know that you may be made a blessing to many. You are called by the Saviour to show your gratitude, and to strengthen your love to Him by doing all you can to honour His religion. Let it be settled in your heart that you are to do what you can for Christ, and your hand will never want employment: your work will be before you every day, and each hour will bring with it its own demands.

Be assured that the great Lord has committed to you at least one talent, and that He has also placed you where that talent can be used in such a way as shall be most for His glory. Just imagine yourself doing your best for Christ, teaching His truth to those who know it not—winning the sinner to His cross—drying up the tears of one whose heart the sense of sin hath broken—carrying the light of your own hope into the chamber of the dying—wrestling with God in prayer for those you love—uniting with your fellow-Christians in observance of all the things which their Lord has commanded, and then proving the sincerity of all these acts of practical devotion by faithfully performing the duties that belong to the station in which God has placed you: imagine *yourself* doing these things, and then say what *you* are worth.

This is no idle question; you know ir is not. It is not an easy question; who can fully answer it? It is not a fruitless question; it may lead you, by God's blessing, to the best thoughts you ever had.

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Self-Converse.



"LET THE MEDITATION OF MY HEART BE ACCEPTABLE IN THY SIGHT, O LORD!"

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Self-Converse.

It may be, reader, that while you are ready to talk with every one else about you, there is one person with whom you seldom converse. Though he is more nearly related to you than all others—though he is always with you—though his interests and yours are one and the same, yet, perhaps, you hardly ever speak a word with him, and live as though he were an entire stranger to you. This is a miserable kind of life. How wretched it must be in all cases, for two different persons closely connected, and dependent upon each other, to have no direct intercourse one with the other! How delightful it is, when with mutual good understanding, they live upon terms of familiar converse with each other!

But who is the person whom you, perhaps, thus treat with silent contempt? Reader, it is yourself! You talk freely with others, but you may rarely or never talk with yourself. Talk with myself! you say; how can I do this? What can I tell myself that is not known to myself? I am not two persons, but one. Madmen only talk to themselves. Yes, madmen talk to themselves; but their madness consists not in this, but in what they say to themselves. Wise and good men converse with themselves, and find it to be a very wholesome and instructive exercise.

Now there is something important in this talking to oneself. It appears at first to be very contradictory and absurd; but the more we examine it, the more rational and profitable it seems. Man can think about himself. He can think upon his bodily senses, upon his mental faculties, upon his own motives and affections, upon his own acts, his own interests, and his own character, and can even speak to himself. He can and does continually talk to others about himself, then why not talk to himself? He is often conscious of opposing principles within himself. One thought is opposed to another thought, one inclination to another inclination; the judgment is often opposed to the will, and the conscience to the affections. And as one faculty of man may be opposed to another, so may one as it were converse with another. The judgment may speak to the inclinations, the conscience to the passions, and the thoughts of the mind to the feelings. Let any one make the experiment, and he will find it to be not only practicable, but profitable. Many have adopted the practice. Heathen moralists recommend it as a principal

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means of obtaining self-knowledge. It has been found to be of good service in religion. It is often employed by the royal psalmist. If he has wandered from God, he says, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul!" If he is dejected in spirit, he says, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" If favoured with new mercies, he exclaims, "Bless the Lord, O my soul!" "I commune," he says, "with mine own heart;" and he thus recommends it to others—"Commune with your own heart upon your bed." It receives the sanction of the apostle, when he says, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts unto the Lord." This speaking to ourselves is one of the secrets of true wisdom. Reader, make the experiment. Break this long silence, and begin to converse with yourself. Talk to your own soul. To assist you in this, suffer a few words of advice upon the manner in which men should address their own souls, and what they should say to them.

How should we address our own souls? We should speak to them in secret. Madmen talk to themselves in the presence of others—wise men speak to themselves in retirement. If no other opportunity occur, it may be done upon the bed. "Commune with your own heart upon your bed," says the psalmist. Our language to our own souls should be such as becomes their nature; they are the intelligent, rational, and immortal part of our being. However degraded they may now be, they are of noble origin, endowed with great powers, and capable of being restored to the image of God, for which they were created. Our language to them should be that of kindness. Have we no sympathy and concern for our own souls? Is not their welfare our welfare?—their joy our joy?—their sorrow our sorrow?—their heaven our heaven?—their hell our hell? What more unnatural than to speak harshly or with indifference to ourselves? And yet many do so with oaths and curses.

And *what* shall we say to ourselves? What shall we talk about? Shall we talk wholly or principally about the things of this life? We read of one who did this. He said to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry." Was this proper language for a man to address to his soul? Observe what was thought of it by God: "But God said unto him: Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" These were not the things in which the soul was principally interested. It is folly to talk with the soul about the affairs of the body only; man should speak to his soul about its own concerns. The soul will be required of him. It is committed to his care. He is intrusted with the formation of its character, and is accountable for its use. Each one is the guardian of his own soul. Its everlasting interests are committed to his trust.

Here, then, is the subject upon which man should converse with his own soul. He should advise with it upon its own affairs. Has it left its Father and its God? Has it, so to speak, wasted its substance in riotous living? Hear the language which the prodigal, in similar circumstances, addressed to himself.

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Hear how he talked to himself: "When he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." This was self-talk. It was a most wise and suitable address from such a man to himself. His recovery from his wretched condition, and restoration to his father's house, began with this speech to himself. It was the first thing he did when he came to himself. When he came to himself, *he said!*

Now these are the circumstances of all, and in this way should all talk to themselves. To a man who has hitherto neglected this practice, it will be the beginning of wisdom. Let such an one talk thus with himself in some season of quiet, or upon his bed in the stillness of the night watches: O my soul! thou hast gone astray from God. Thou hast forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. Thou hast long tried to find happiness in the things of this world, and only multiplied thy sorrows and cares. What fruit hadst thou in those things whereof thou art now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. Hast thou ever known what real happiness is? Has there not always been a secret consciousness that all was not right between thee and God? Come now, O my soul! return to that God from whom thou hast gone astray. He has not lost the heart of a father, though thou hast lost the heart of a son. He has dealt mercifully with thee, though thou hast dealt unjustly and ungratefully with Him. He has sent His well-beloved and only-begotten Son to obey the law in thy stead—to shed His blood for the remission of thy sins, and to invite thee to return unto the Father by Him. Now, O my soul! cast thyself at His feet; confess thy folly, and the justice of thy condemnation; commit thyself into the hands of this gracious Shepherd, as a wanderer, to lead thee back to God. Then shalt thou find true happiness and peace. "Return unto thy rest, O my soul! for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

Reader, could you be persuaded to talk thus with yourself, it would be a new and happy period of your existence. If you resolve to maintain silence with yourself, and not speak to yourself now about the soul's everlasting interests, but to live, in fact, without serious reflection, you will speak hereafter in the language of bitterness, and to eternity you will lie under the lash of self-condemnation and self-inflicted wrath. Go, speak to yourself. Seek for inward peace now, that you may not have remorse through eternity. Sin has produced misery and fear; faith in the Saviour from sin will bring that peace to the heart and mind that passeth all understanding.

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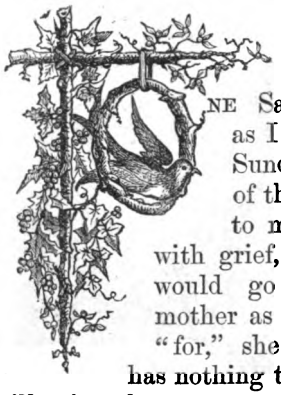
THE UNHAPPY FAMILY MADE HAPPY.



"DO NOT CRY, DEAR MOTHER! GOD WILL MAKE FATHER GOOD!"

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The Unhappy Family made Happy.



One Sabbath morning, as I was leaving the Sunday-school, one of the children came to me, and, sobbing with grief, begged that I would go and see her mother as soon as I could; "for," she said, "mother has nothing to eat, and father will give her no money." I asked, "Where is your father gone?" She said, "I do not know; but he always goes out on Sunday morning, and never comes home till near night." "Have you had any breakfast?" "Yes, but mother has had none. My mother, my poor mother!" exclaimed the child, with great grief. Knowing the child, and having heard much of the depraved habits of her father, I readily believed her tale of woe, and made prompt arrangements to provide food for this unhappy family during that day. After the morning service, I went to this abode of misery and want, both of which were caused by the father's sin of Sabbath-breaking.

As I entered their little dwelling, where all was clean and neat, though it had a look of poverty, the mother of the child meekly rose, and made one or two steps towards me, but soon sank down in her chair, and, covering her face with her hands, wept bitterly. She was not quite thirty years of age, but appeared as if she were fifty; care and sorrow had done the work of years. The mother continued weeping for some time, and so did her two children; the eldest, a little girl, nine years of age, often trying to comfort her, saying, "Our good minister prays for us, mother. Do not cry; God will hear his prayer, and make father good, and then he will love us."

When the poor woman had given vent to her feelings by continued weeping, and was sufficiently composed to speak, her first words were expressive of thankfulness to God, who had raised up friends to help her and comfort her in her trouble. "It is no small part of my trouble," said she, "to be obliged to receive help. I ought to be able to give for the assistance of others, and I should be so, if it were not for these Sunday companions and Sunday strollings. William," referring to her husband, "is a good workman, and receives every week twenty-five shillings; and with the five shillings a week I receive from my mother's executors, we might be very comfortable ourselves, and have something to give away."

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"But," I said, "you do not mean to say that your husband spends the whole of his week's earnings on Sunday?"

"Not exactly so: some times he will give me ten shillings on the Saturday night, for two or three weeks together, and I get him something nice for his Sunday dinner; but only once in two years has he stayed at home a whole Sunday. If he return home with any money, I know it is condemned, because it is on Sunday his companions fix on the days and on the public-houses where they will meet in the week."

After exhorting this daughter of affliction to continue to look to Christ for her own salvation, and to be careful to instruct her children, as far as she was able, in the ways of the Lord, I commended her and her two children to God in prayer, and pleaded with God on behalf of the absent father, that he might be convinced of the error of his ways, and be converted. Just as I was leaving the house, I observed that the poor woman rose, and attempted to go with me to the door, but almost fell in the attempt. She was unable to walk, from an injury received on the hip, which I ascertained (but not from herself) was inflicted by a violent blow from her husband.

The children's clothing seemed, at all times, to tell of the cleanliness and industry of the mother.

About one month after this visit had been paid, William had, as usual, gone out on the Sabbath morning; and his wife, having waited at home, anxiously expecting his return, until about six o'clock in the evening, went with her younger daughter to public worship, leaving their room in charge of the elder child, Jane. It was in the month of October, when the days were getting short, and darkness had begun before the mother and child left to go to the house of God. They had not quitted their house more than a quarter of an hour when the father came home. As he entered, he inquired, in a rough tone, "Where is your mother, Jenny?" "Gone to ————, father." No sooner had the child named the place of worship, than he swore he would fetch her out, and drag her home by the hair of her head.

Thus saying, he left the house, hastened to the place of worship, and just as he entered, and began looking eagerly over the place, he heard the text announced, "Be sure your sin will find you out." This truth fastened on his mind, and held him in fixed attention to the close of the discourse. He hastened home to escape observation.

Little Jane, who had trembled and listened, and listened and trembled, at the sound of every footstep, expecting to endure a more painful scene than she had ever witnessed before, was surprised by the gentle lifting of the latch, and the quiet entrance of her father, who was sorrowful, but not cross.

"Did you find mother?" was the immediate inquiry of Jane.

"No, my child," said the father, with a tone the child could not understand. He sat down by the fireside, drew Jane nearer to him, and kissed her, and wept aloud. A few minutes elapsed, and his wife and younger child came in. There sat the husband, so to speak, "clothed, and in his right mind;" and, with a meekness never before displayed, he said,

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"Why, Mary, you have told your minister all about me."

"No," said his wife; "I seldom see him; and if I had told him, you will not go to hear him."

"Then," said he, "God must have told him. He knows what a sinner I am. He seemed to be preaching to me, when I heard him this evening; but I will hear him again, if God will let me."

The word had been conveyed by the Holy Spirit to his heart and conscience. He wept. He was convinced that he was a sinner, and expressed his fears that his sins were too great and too numerous to be pardoned. His wife, a truly Christian woman, became, as she had often tried before to be, a messenger of mercy to him: she pointed to his present convictions and repentance as the operations of that Spirit who would not forsake the work thus begun. She told him of the all sufficiency of Christ to save to the uttermost, and that He was as willing as He was able to save all that come unto Him.

Thus instructed and encouraged, he at length fled, as a guilty sinner, to the cross, and through grace obtained mercy. He believed, and found peace.

That Sabbath evening will never be forgotten. The hours passed away rapidly; but, before they retired to rest, at his wife's request, the Bible was read: the third chapter of the Gospel by John was the portion selected; then, for the first time, the father, mother, and two children knelt down together; while, with a broken heart, and abrupt sentences, the reclaimed Sabbath-breaker poured out his confessions and desires to God, who never despises "a broken and contrite heart."

He now spent his evenings at home, and employed much of his time in reading the Bible and the books which he obtained from the Sunday-school library. He totally abstained from all intoxicating drinks. He shunned the society of his former companions, and esteemed it a privilege to have intercourse with those who were pious. His love for prayer became very great. These and other satisfactory proofs of his decided conversion to God were daily and increasingly afforded.

The Sabbath is now the happy day to that family. Peace and comfort are enjoyed where discord and misery reigned; comparative wealth is possessed where poverty inflicted bitter pains. The joy-beaming countenances of the children confirm what they once said—"Father loves us now."

That family affords a proof of the truth of the Divine word, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

Reader, improve your Sabbaths for the glory of God and the good of your soul. The Sabbath-breaker prepares for himself sorrow in time, and woe in eternity. But do you fly from the present misery, and eternal ruin. Trust in Christ, and serve Him, and you will be saved and happy.

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Do not be Offended.



THE LITTLE CAPTIVE MAID.

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Do not be Offended.

So he turned and went away in a rage. And why did Naaman go away from the prophet in a rage?

He was a great and honourable man at the court of Syria, a mighty and victorious general, and a favourite of the king—*but he was a leper.* In compliance with the advice of a little captive Jewess, he took princely gifts, and went to the prophet Elisha to be cured. Naaman arrived in state at the prophet's dwelling, where he expected to be received with deference and respect, but Elisha simply "sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." Then "Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage."[1]

The directions of the prophet and the manner of conveying them were *mortifying to his pride,* and therefore Naaman was offended. Had it been the poorest servant of his household, with no retinue, no rank, and not a shekel of silver to call his own, he could not have been received with less distinction, and would have been equally able to obtain a cure on terms such as these.

Again: the directions given were entirely *different from the notions he had formed* of the way of obtaining a cure, and therefore he was offended. He seems to have made up his mind that he was to be cured like a great man; and he had brought his talents of silver and pieces of gold to pay for it. But no; instead of standing and receiving his cure from the hands of the prophet with *an unhumbled heart,* he must lay aside all his lofty notions, and *do an act* which should prove *that his heart was humbled,* and his pride subdued. He must go and wash seven times in Jordan.

And more: if Naaman was displeased with this mode of cure, *there was no other way* presented to him, and therefore he was offended. He must either go and dip himself seven times in Jordan, or he must live and die a leper. Surely, he seems to have thought, Elisha might have told me of a way more agreeable to my feelings. "So he turned and went

[1] 2 Kings v. 11, 12.

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away in a rage." Ah, perhaps the reader may say, this was very foolish in Naaman, to reject for such reasons the means of escaping so dreadful a disease.

But may it not be said, as by Nathan to David, THOU ART THE MAN? Thou art afflicted with a disease worse than that of Naaman—*the leprosy of sin;* and unless thou art healed by the only means which Christ, the good Physician, has prescribed, the result will be not the death of the body merely, but the ruin of the never-dying soul.

As Naaman was told by Elisha how to be cured of his leprosy, so have you been told that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," but the name of Jesus Christ.[1] You have been told that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" and that "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but *the wrath of God abideth on him.*"[2] And while you have heard the only way of salvation faithfully proclaimed, and the consequences of neglecting it solemnly pointed out, perhaps, like Naaman, you have been offended and gone away in a rage.

The terms of the gospel are *mortifying to the pride* of the natural heart. "What!" say you, perhaps, "is such a man as I am not entitled to salvation? an honourable man, a learned man; or, if neither great nor learned, an honest man, a sober man, a respectable man, a moral man—must I come upon the same terms as the thief, or the drunkard, or the profligate?"

[1] Acts iv. 12. [2] John iii. 16, 36.

And when you have been told that all your respectability, all your morality, all your self-righteousness, can avail nothing in the matter of justification; that the blood of Jesus Christ, and *that alone,* cleanseth from all sin; and that you must either wash in that fountain for sin, or remain a poor miserable leper for ever, you have been offended, and, like Naaman, have gone away in a rage.

But Naaman had prudent servants, and they reasoned with him kindly and wisely. When he was turning away in a rage, they said to him, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" Happy for Naaman that he was blest with these kind advisers, and that he listened to their advice. He followed the directions of the prophet, and was healed of his leprosy, so that "his flesh came again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

In like manner go to Jesus, wash in the "fountain which He has opened for sin and for uncleanness," and be at once healed of the leprosy of sin. Why, like Naaman, should you turn away in a rage? My brother, my sister, my father, if thou wert commanded to do some great thing, wouldest thou not do it to obtain eternal life? how much rather when it is only, Wash, and be clean; believe, and be saved; depend not on thy doings that thou mayest merit salvation, but simply trust in Christ, who has done all; and rely upon His atonement and righteousness as the only and sufficient ground of hope and dependence for thee, a poor perishing and guilty sinner.

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Is it with a *once dear relative* you are now offended? that husband or wife, brother or sister, son or daughter, who has left you alone to tread the road you once travelled together, the road that leads to death? Oh, do not be offended. If you are resolved to destroy your own soul by rejecting the only way of salvation, do not require him or her to do the same. Be content to go down to hell alone, without requiring one who was once dear to be your companion on that miserable journey. But you need not be separated; accompany that dear friend in the road which leads to heaven; trust in the same precious Saviour, and you shall meet in the same heaven at last.

Is it with *the truth* you are offended? the truth that you are by nature a lost and guilty sinner; that except you repent you must perish; that salvation, if obtained at all, must be, not through your own merits, but the merits and sufferings of another; and that the honour of that salvation will belong not to you, but to Christ, who gave Himself a ransom for many? No doubt these truths are as offensive to the unrenewed heart as were Elisha's directions to the proud Naaman; and many who hear them, like him, go away in a rage. But, oh, fellow-sinner, do not be offended! These are Bible truths, whether you believe them or whether you reject them; and remember that your unbelief or your anger does not alter their nature—*they are truths still;* and if you do not believe them before, you will find them to be truths when it is too late to avail yourself of that knowledge. Oh solemn, solemn words! and yet they are the words of Christ,—"He that believeth not shall be damned."[1]

Is it with *the Lord Jesus Christ* you are offended? From the evident unwillingness to hear His name mentioned which is displayed by some, no less than from the open enmity which is shown by others to Christ and His religion, it is, alas! too manifest that there are many who are offended with Christ Himself. But why offended with the precious Saviour, who left His throne to suffer and agonise on the cross to provide a way of salvation for thee, poor sinner? Oh, do not be offended with HIM who shed His precious blood to open a fountain for sin and uncleanness. Rather come to Him as a poor, weary, heavy-laden sinner, crying for mercy, for He has invited you in those blessed words, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."[2]

[1] Mark xvi. 16. [2] Matt. xi. 28.

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The New-Made Grave.



"LORD, MAKE ME TO KNOW MINE END."

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The New-Made Grave.



It was a bright sunny evening in June, when, tired with business, I went out to seek refreshment for mind and body, and feeling disposed for quiet and meditation, I followed a path which led through several meadows to a rural village.

Everything I saw drew me to reflect upon the bounty and mercy, as well as the wonder-working power of a gracious God. The rich crops of grass were waving in the meadows around, while at a distance the bright green of many fields told that we might look forward to an abundant harvest of the corn which God has given for the use of man. The hedgerows sent forth the rich perfume of the white hawthorn, and thousands of shining insects were sporting in the air, or floating on the water. How widely spread and abundant are the mercies and benevolence of God towards all His creatures, and especially to undeserving man. I soon reached the village church, where I sat down on a rustic seat in the church-yard. I found myself near to a new-made grave, which the dry, withered appearance of the turf showed to have been lately opened to receive the body of some one departed. Whoever he might have been—and it was unknown to me whether he were young or old, whether he had been loved and respected as a true Christian, or whether, unmourned, he had been called from scenes of vice and misery to fill the narrow coffin—one thing was certain, that the fellow-creature by whose grave I sat, must "appear before the judgment seat of Christ," to "receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."[1] "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."[2]

Whilst these thoughts were passing through my mind, I saw an elderly woman approaching; she courtesied civilly, and this encouraged me to ask her, "Whose grave is that?"

"Ah, miss," she replied, "that is a sad story;" and as she spoke she came up, and leaning against the wall, looked over at the new-made grave. "Poor gentleman!" she continued, "he little thought his end was so near. You know, miss, one of the Hall farms is to let, and it is supposed that this gentleman came to look at it. The coach set him down at the Plough Inn, one evening, about ten days ago; he ordered a bed, and then walked out. When he came back he had supper, inquired about the farm, asked when was

[1] 2 Cor. v. 10. [2] Rev. xx. 12.

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a likely time for him to find the squire at home, and after chatting very pleasantly with the landlady, went upstairs. The next morning, when she went to his door to call him, he did not answer, so at last she went in, and there he was, miss, leaning over the bed, with some of his clothes on. She ran up to him, but—he was dead! She sent for the doctor, but all in vain; he thought the gentleman must have died in a fit as soon as he went upstairs the night before." "This is indeed an awful instance of sudden death," I said, as the woman paused; "and did no one know who this stranger was?" "Why, miss," she replied, "they searched his pockets, and found some papers, and part of a letter; but they had to wait for further information till the coach came through again, and then the coachman told them who he was. They wrote to tell his friends what had happened, but when they came it was too late to take him away, so they buried him very decently here, and one of the gentlemen that attended the funeral ordered a stone for his grave. Ah, miss," she added, in a solemn tone, as she turned slowly away, "I hope he was prepared for this sudden change, for 'where the tree falleth, there it shall be.'"

Once more left alone, I returned to my reflections. Perhaps, thought I, my turn may be next; to-morrow I may be found, like this my fellow-sinner, a corpse. He was seeking after this world's necessities and comforts; he was providing for the body; had he provided for the soul? But am I myself prepared to meet that solemn day of the Lord, which "will come as a thief in the night?" Shall I then be found among those unhappy beings of whom our Lord says, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," or among those whom He has promised to welcome with these precious words, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world?" The same question is equally important to every fellow-sinner: Are you prepared for instant death, and for the day of judgment? You know not that you will be spared to see to-morrow's sun; the finger of the Lord may now be singling you out, and before this day is ended, an accident, or the sudden stroke of disease, may cry aloud to you, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." Rest not till you have searched your own hearts, and discovered whether you have received Christ as all your salvation, and all your hope, or whether you have been going on from day to day, hoping that mercy and pardon will be granted to you, though you still refuse to come to Christ, and are still living without God in the world. There is but one way whereby we may escape the condemnation we deserve: Jesus pointed it out to us when He said, "I am the way."[1]

Are you, dear reader, living for God, or still grasping after the vanities of earth? Are your days spent in sinful indulgence, in drunkenness, gaming, idle talking and jesting; or are you feeding on the bread of life, and finding all your joy in Christ, and making Him known to others? If *your* soul should this night be required of you, would it be found ready for the presence of the Lord?

Fathers and mothers, who are earning bread for your families by the sweat of

[1] John xiv. 6.

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your brow, what is it you live for? what are you seeking for your children? Only the things that "perish with the using," or that "pearl of great price" which can never be taken from them? What are you teaching them by your word and example; to serve God, or to serve Satan? What, too, is the state of your own souls; is the good seed choked by the cares and anxieties which surround you? Oh, commit your way unto the Lord, trust in Him, fret not yourselves about earthly evil that may never come; gird up your loins, and have your lights burning, for the word may have already gone forth, and before morning dawns you may be numbered with the dead.

Ye young men and maidens, who are so apt to say, "There is time enough; we will prepare for judgment when our youth is past, let us enjoy the world a little longer," it becomes you also to reflect. How can you make sure of a single day? Have you never missed a brother, a sister, a companion from your side, younger perhaps than yourselves, and yet cut off by the stroke of death? Have not many of you, when told that some friend or neighbour was called from earth, been ready to exclaim, "Who would have thought that one so young and strong would be the first to go?" and why may not that which has befallen others, befall you also? Oh, be assured of the truth of those words of the apostle James, "Ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Are *you* then ready to stand in the presence of God? Are you ready to give account of every thought, and word, and deed? Ask yourselves, should the angel of the Lord be sent to summon you from the theatre, the race-course, the fair, the gaming-table, or from any of the haunts of vice where the hours of night are passed in the dance and the revel, in listening to the song of the drunkard, the curses of the blasphemer, or the indecent jests of the corrupt; ask yourselves, if from such scenes as these you should be called to take your place among the silent dead, where would your souls be found at the dreadful day of account? Oh, tremble to think that the terrible sentence would then be pronounced against you, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!"

To every reader there is but one way of preparation, and that is at hand. But lose not a moment, it may be your last; seek the Lord Jesus Christ in earnest; lean on Him as your rock of defence; come to Him by a true faith, that you may be covered with the robe of His righteousness; look to Him for pardon, and for justification and sanctification by His Spirit; bring to Him all your sins, your sorrows, your cares; repent, and believe the gospel, and thus shall you find peace all the days of your life; and whether the hour of your departure shall be in the morning of youth, the mid-day of manhood, or the evening of old age, it will be but the changing of a vile body for a glorious body; the passing from trial and sorrow to peace and glory.

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At Midnight.



"BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH; GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM!"

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At Midnight.

One of the most affecting scenes in the life of the Rev. George Whitefield, was his preaching in Hyde Park at the solemn hour of midnight, in the end of March, 1750.

London had been thrown into great consternation by an earthquake. Fear seized the hearts of the people. An idle or wicked prediction was circulated that a part of London and Westminster would be destroyed on a certain night between twelve and one o'clock. When the night came, thousands fled from the city to await the awful event in the fields. Many churches and chapels were filled with excited audiences. Whitefield repaired to Hyde Park at midnight, to speak to the people assembled there. The vast space was one sea of living beings. Whitefield rose, and began to speak amidst the most breathless silence. His soul was in sympathy with the solemn occasion, and with pathos and much power he led the minds of his audience to the consideration of that great day, when all will stand before God, and receive the reward of their deeds; and when the framework of nature will be dissolved, and the earth and its works be burned up. His appeals to their hearts and consciences were overwhelming; and, as his impassioned eloquence streamed forth, he carried his audience along with him, bringing terror to the sinner, hope to the desponding, faith to the awakened, and peace and joy to the believing heart. He wrote to Lady Huntingdon, and said, "God has been terribly shaking the metropolis. I hope it is an earnest of His giving a shock to secure sinners, and making them cry out, 'What shall we do to be saved?'"

Another remarkable midnight scene, connected also with an earthquake, occurs in the life of Paul, who, with Silas, had just arrived in Europe, for the first time, and had preached in Philippi "the way of salvation." For "many days" these servants of Christ were allowed to prosecute their work unmolested; but after a time they were brought before the magistrates, who laid many stripes upon them, cast them into prison, and charged the jailer to keep them safely. "And at midnight," we are told, "Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of

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the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."[1]

In this narrative there is mention, it will be observed, of a midnight song, a midnight alarm, and a midnight deliverance.

How the magistrates felt after committing these innocent men to prison, we are not told. Nor do we know how the jailer felt after thrusting them into the inner prison, and making their feet fast in the stocks. But the two prisoners were able to rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. Sleepless and weary as they were—racked with pain, too, as we may judge from their position in the stocks—they were heard about midnight, from the depths of their dungeon, praying and singing hymns to God. "Such sounds as these were new in a Roman dungeon. Whoever the other poor prisoners might be—whether they were the victims of oppression, or were suffering the punishment of guilt—debtors, slaves, rebels, or murderers, they listened with surprise to the voices of those who filled the midnight of the prison with sounds of cheerfulness and joy; when suddenly, as if in direct answer to the prayer of His servants, an earthquake shook the very foundations of the prison, the gates were broken, the bars were smitten asunder, and the bands of the prisoners loosed."

The prison at Philippi presented a picture very different from that which will be found in our modern English jails. The "inner prisons" of the ancient world were pestilential cells, damp and cold, from which the light was excluded, and where the chains rusted on the limbs of the prisoners.

It must have been no mean or earthly joy which filled the hearts of Paul and Silas, when they could sing in such circumstances. It *is* no earthly joy which fills the hearts of those who can say, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."[1]

The prisoners were filled with joy, but the jailer was soon filled with alarm. Awakened in a moment by the earthquake, his first thought was of the prisoners; and, aware that inevitable death awaited him, according to Roman law, in the event of the prisoners committed to his care having escaped, he resolved to be his own executioner, and drew his sword for the purpose. Many Romans, brave and proud, but without

[1] Acts xvi. 25-31.

[1] Rom. viii. 35, 37-39.

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the knowledge of God, are known to have committed suicide at Philippi, and this despairing man would have followed their example, had not his hand been arrested by the apostle's voice.

Finding his prisoners safe, he was oppressed with a new fear: "What must I do to be saved?" he exclaimed. The way of salvation had been, he had probably heard, the theme on which these prisoners had discoursed to the people of Philippi; and he was now assured that they were indeed the servants of the most high God. Their answer to his question was, "'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' Believe not in us, but in Him whom we preach—the Son of God, the one Mediator between God and man—and thou shalt be saved; and not only thou, but the like faith shall bring salvation to all thy house."

And then to the midnight alarm succeeded a glorious midnight deliverance. The meaning of faith in Jesus was explained, and the gospel was preached to the jailer's family at that midnight hour. The dread of punishment and perdition passed away from the trembling, but now penitent man. He found peace with God. The power of sin was broken at the same time. The man appeared at once "a new creature." His cruelty was changed into love. That same hour of the night he took his prisoners, and washed their stripes, and brought them into his house, and supplied their wants. It was a night of happiness for all. Paul and Silas doubtless renewed their praises to God that "His power had been made perfect in their weakness;" and the jailer's family had their first experience of that joy which is the fruit of believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Many of the prisoners may have had reason to bless God for the conversion of their keeper. The good news of salvation which had brought such happiness to himself, he could not fail to be eager to impart to them.

In our Lord's parable of the ten virgins, which is recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, we read: "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go out ye to meet him." The hour is coming, and may be very near, when the writer and the reader of this tract shall be summoned to appear in the presence of God. A mere profession of religion will be of no avail then. Every disguise will be stripped off, and every man shall appear in his true character. Have you, my friend, a good hope that, through that Saviour whom Paul preached in the Philippian jail, and whom Whitefield preached to trembling sinners in Hyde Park, you can die in peace, and stand without fear before the Judge of all? If not, may that Holy Spirit, even now while you read this tract, convince you of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and enable you to look to Christ for pardon and eternal life.

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The Renewing of the Holy Ghost.



"LYDIA—WHOSE HEART THE LORD OPENED, THAT SHE ATTENDED UNTO THE THINGS WHICH WERE SPOKEN OF PAUL."

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The Renewing of the Holy Ghost.



The work of the Holy Spirit in changing man's sinful heart, and training the soul for heaven, is a principal subject of the blessed gospel; and to have this grace is essential to salvation. Speaking of the Holy Spirit, Baxter writes: "Thou art more to souls than souls to bodies, than light to eyes: I am dead to all good, and all that is good is dead to me, if Thou be not the life of all; God is as no God to me, and heaven as no heaven, and Christ as no Christ, if Thou represent them not with light and power to my soul; even as all the glory of the world is as nothing to me without the light by which it is seen.—Transcribe those sacred precepts on my heart, which by Thy dictates and inspirations are recorded in Thy holy word." Most precious indeed are the heavenly influences of such a Friend, leading to peace, and joy, and life.

The work of the Holy Spirit upon the mind and heart is an inward work, and is shown by its effects. The Saviour compares it to the wind:[1] "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit:" the wind is unseen, but its power is felt, and its effects beheld.

In saving sinners, the work of Christ was to atone for sin, to bear its penalty in man's stead as his substitute, and to provide a righteousness for man whereby he might be justified: as it is written, God "hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."[1]

The office of the Holy Spirit is to prepare for the acceptance and enjoyment of this salvation by giving a new heart and a new spirit,[2] and making the subjects of His grace new creatures in Christ Jesus. Man is an enemy to God, but, renewed by the Holy Spirit, he becomes a friend; he is alienated from God, but by the same Spirit the once alienated heart is filled with love. The Holy Spirit finds the sinner grovelling in the mire of sin, and purifies his heart and raises his affection to things above. This is described as a new creation; and the description is as correct as it is expressive. The change produced as to character, tastes, feelings, affections, connexions, prospects, present state and

[1] John iii. 8.

[1] 2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 24; iii. 18.
[2] Psa. li. 10; Ezek. xi. 19; xxxvi. 26; John iii. 7.

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future abode, is truly wonderful. See the sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, a rebel against God, and an enemy to Him; with no holy love in his heart, ungodly in his life; having no tastes for religious things; worldly in his affections; his present state condemnation, and his future prospect perdition.

Again, look at him now, made a partaker of Divine grace: how unlike his former self! He has become a partaker of spiritual life, and is a child of God; he loves his heavenly Father and his Redeemer with supreme affection; he follows after holiness, delights in the things and ways of God; sets his affections on things above; belongs to the family of God; his present state is peace and safety, and his future prospect eternal glory. How changed from what he was, and from what the unconverted are! Here is truly a new creation.

In effecting this great change in man, there are many diversities in the Spirit's operations. This is apparent in the accounts of conversions in the New Testament. How different were those of Paul and of the jailer and Lydia! On the one hand all was awful and alarming; on the other the work of Divine grace was gentle and calm—the heart was opened, and Christ was welcomed.

There is diversity as to the time of life: some are converted in age, some in middle life, and some in youth or childhood. There is diversity as to the circumstances and means; some are awakened by illness, some by reading, some by conversation; occasionally a single remark or a sentence in a letter has led to the conversion of a soul. Parental teaching is blessed to many in childhood; but the preaching of the gospel is the most usual means which God employs; "Faith cometh by hearing." At times, God in some unusual manner awakens the sinner and prepares him to receive and obey the gospel: such a case was Colonel Gardiner's, who saw, or thought he saw, a vision of Christ on the cross, and heard, or thought he heard, the words, "O sinner! did I suffer this for thee? and are these the returns?" Such, too, according to his biographer, was the case of Mr. Thorpe, of Bristol. He dreamed that the day of judgment had come, and awoke in terror; he fell asleep, and again the scene was presented to him in a more awful and terrific manner; again he awoke, but, strange as it may seem, dropped asleep once more. A third time his dream recurred, but now in a way so much more terrific, that he declared he never could describe the scene. He awoke again, to sleep no more that night, and from that hour turned into the path of life.

This diversity is found in the feelings awakened in new converts. Some see hope from their first awakening, others long see none. Widely different were the feelings of Baxter and Bunyan: the first seemingly converted from his infancy; the other struggling through deep waters of affliction, through an ocean of spiritual distress and almost of despair, which intervened between his youthful years of rebellion and sin, and his after-years of peace and holiness. So great would be the difference between the feelings of Doddridge and his beloved friend, Colonel Gardiner: the first taught in his infancy the truths of

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religion by a pious mother; the other, after years of guilt, awakened to a knowledge of his extreme wickedness, abhorring himself as the vilest wretch on whom the sun shone, and long without one glimpse of hope that such a sinner could ever find mercy, though attaining such hope at last. In these and other cases, much as the feelings differ, the same Spirit works.

There is a diversity of operations shown in the experience of converts after their conversion, and in that of the same persons in different stages of their Christian course: some are taught one part of religious truth sooner or more deeply; others another portion. Some learn humility by being led to see more and more the evil of their own hearts; others, with as real a self-acquaintance as the most dejected, excel in gratitude and love, through brighter views of the Saviour's work. Persons equally devoted to God pass through a very different path in their pilgrimage to heaven. Brainerd, distinguished for even apostolic zeal, was generally struggling with despondency and spiritual distress; while Fletcher of Madeley, not a more holy man than he, was rejoicing in his Lord "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Many an unlettered Christian has obtained the full assurance of faith; while the venerable Carey, not many years before his death, declared that he had never been able to get beyond "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Amidst all these diversities there is substantial sameness: as the work is the work of the same Spirit, it ends in the same effects. In all cases of true conversion the soul is humbled for sin, and penitent; the conscience becomes tender and afraid of sin; the will is subdued, the soul is led to Jesus; He becomes its trust and sole dependence, and is loved and prized above all things else. Imitation of Him and obedience to His precepts follow. Prayer brings comfort and joy. The heart is set on God and heaven, where its treasures are laid up. And perseverance to the end evidences that this great change is indeed the work of God.

The diversity in the Spirit's operations should teach Christians not to set up their own experience as a standard for all others; and should also teach young Christians not to set up the experience of others as a standard for their own.

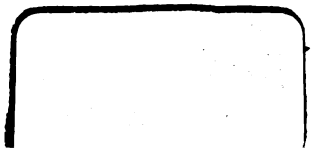
Let your grand inquiry be, "Have I, by the Holy Spirit, been so taught and led to Christ, that He is my trust, my life, my God, my all?" Be thankful if this is your happiness. If you are a stranger to this blessedness, no longer delay, but cry to God for the gift of the Holy Spirit to guide you to the Saviour.

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